

ARABIAN SEA IN INDIA'S SECURITY-- A GEO-POLITICAL STUDY

A THESIS

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "Arabian Sea in India's Security : A Geo-Political Study" submitted in fulfilment of the Degree of Ph.D. in Defence Studies of the Bundelkhand University, Jhansi is a record of bonafide research carried out by Mr. Ramesh Singh under my guidance and supervision.

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(DR. O.P. SINGH)

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Introduction

National security depends upon a number of factors that span the field of Geo-strategy, Geo-politics, National interests and International relations with their neighbouring countries. Geo-strategic location is one of the most important factor for the security of the nation. India's location in the world map has been a constant factor for its security. The Himalaya's in the north and Indian Ocean in the south had served in the past as a natural barrer of India's security against aggressions by foreigners. But in the changed circumstances of present time, heights of mountain and depths of the sea are no more barrier. China therefore, could succeed in fulfilling its ambitions in the Himalayas and United Kingdom & United states of America could succeed their ambitions for establishing strong naval bases in the world oceans.

India's location as a littoral countries in the east of Arabian sea is one for its being dominant committed to the establishment of peace and stability in this region, as well as its own security. In the past the British never relaxed their hold on Arabian sea due to its Geo-political location surrounded by India, Pakistan, Iran, Oman, P.D.R, Yemen, Djibuti, Somalia and Maldiev. It formed a vital point of India's security in the west. Its location caused the Government of India to watch the development in all the littoral countries of the Arabian sea. An other important British interest in the Arabian sea was the trade from India to west through Red sea, Sweg canal to Mediterranean sea, both the security of India and the development of trade routes between India and littoral countries of Afro-Asian countries and European countries.

India is a maritime nation. Most of its growing foreign trade passes through international straits such as Malacca, straits of Hormuz, Bal-al-Mandab. India exports 70% oil through Hormuz straits. Suez canal is also of vital importance to India as 80% of the Indian ships passes through the canal. So, India needs uninterrupted passage for its ships and overflights in the Arabian sea.

Great powers interested in the Gulf region & Arabian sea are the U.K., France, the USA and USSR. Throughout the last century and a half, Indian ocean, Arabian sea & Persian Gulf remained a British lake. The British interest was to promote their trade and political influence in the Gulf under the pretext of curbing the slave trade and piracy. With march of the twentieth century British oil interests in the Gulf increased and the British Navy, which switched over to oil from steam before world war I was inextricably bound to the Persian Gulf oil through Arabian sea. With the opening of Suez canal U.K. got a very easy entrance to send their naval forces to Gulf region and Arabian sea from their home ports via Suez taking about a week or so to do so, as compared to about five weeks around the Cape of Good Hope. But at present U.K. is no longer capable of playing there like USA & USSR as it had played for two centuries before.

French interests are mainly economic, the import of petrol products and export of weapons, industrial plants and advanced technology. The US sixth fleet from its bases in the eastern Mediterranean can also conveniently send its task forces in the Indian ocean through Red sea & Arabian sea taking only 4 days or so.

The USSR derives considerable strategic advantage from the opening of waterway at as it has considerably shortend the route of their warships. It can now send its ships from the black sea base at sevastapol 2200 miles from the Arabian sea via swez rather than 1100 miles long trip around Africa or the 9000 miles long trip from Vladivostak - the time taken being reduced from about 22 days to just 5 days. Such a short-cut route would facilitate quick Soviet access to the Indian ocean through Arabian sea.

Concluding by it may be said that the ostensible justification for world powers military present in the region is stated to be mainly the protection of maritime routes, especially oil supply lines to and from. The persian Gulf oil fields against hostile naval presence in Arabian sea. The real intentions of the Great powers to assist the colonial regimes in the littoral countries influence oil producing countries of Arabian sea to strengthen moderate regimes and support their allies in the area, to protect their economic and other interests.

The Sino-Pak collusion can be a threat to Indian security in the Arabian sea. Where they can jointly mobilize their naval powers with help of America against India. The opening of Karakoram highway through Khunjreb pass in Pak occupied Kashmir i.e. Kashgar, Gilgit Karachi road has a great significance for China as it gives her direct overland access to the Arabian sea. The Peeking Islamabad axis is a game deeper than what meets the naked eye. To the Pakistan leadership observed with fear of India, friendship with China has become sacrosanct. They had contributed their role as a bridge between washington and Peeking.

Although Arabian sea is a small sea yet with the Bulk of the world population living along its shores, can not over emphasized. The interruption of the big powers in the Indian ocean as well as its interests in the person Gulf countries had made the security problem of the region further complicated. Thus there is great need for the establishment of security system in the Arabian sea. The fall of shah of Iran, the USSR presence in Afghanistan and occurrence of Iran-Iraq war has emerged a new power vacuum in the littoral countries of arabian sea. As a result U.S. has strated to provide a massive military aid to Pakistan for making their strong power balance influence in the region. China is a great supporter of US-Pak alliance. The collaboration of US-Pak-China has emerged new horizons of Geo-strategical, Geo-political appraisal in Arabian sea for the security of India.

Geo-Historical Background

The Arabian sea and the littorals surrounding it have figured prominently in history since time immemorial. The ancient civilizations of Babylon, Mesopotamia and India have flourished along its shores. The Persian, Greek, Arab and Indians have left their imprints on these littoral lands. The Portuguse, Dutch and the French have each ventured into these waters in the not too distant past, and the British converted this area of sea in to their personal lake only 100 years ago. While the united states is prepared to use force to protect what it considers to be, its vital interests in this region, the Soviet a few hundred kilometres away, are most concerned with recent developments just beyond their southern borders.

The Persian Gulf an extension of Arabian sea has become the focus of attention of almost the entire world. It is only the deposits of carbon that have given this area such as strategic importance. Are regional ambitions likely to effect the peace and stability of South Asia ? How is USA & USSR going to respond such problem in future and what impact does Arabian sea area has on India's security.

To answer these questions a detailed analysis of the Geopolitical and Geo-strategic significance of the Arabian sea will be necessary. This study will address itself to the factors which play a significant role in determining an area's political and strategic importance and then examine these in relation to contemporary developments in the Arabian sea. The domestic pressures in each countries, the regional conflicts and the relation of these littoral nations with outside powers will also be analysed with a view to identifying the problem and prospects of peace in the Arabian sea area in foreseeable future.

Geostrategic & Geopolitical Significance

Arabian sea is located in the North-western part of the Indian ocean in between 0° to 25° North Latitudes and 50° to 80° Eastern longitudes : It has 6500 kms. of coast line, with about 1200 islands and 578 islets, including Lakshadweep, Minicoy and Maldives. It covers only about 7% of the total area of the Indian Ocean. It receives 9% of Global river runoff. It is separating the two peninsulas India and Arabia. The northern boundary of the sea is land locked and it receives waters of high salinity from the Gulf and the red sea. The Gulf water flows through the Hormuz strait which has a maximum sill-depth of about 100 m while the red sea water flows through the

strait of Bal-el-Mahdab with the maximum sill depth of 125 ms. These are the only two water masses of the Arabian sea which originates from the north. The presence of the Gulf and the Red sea water masses have been traced all over the Arabian sea up to the equator. The Gulf water can be identified in the depth range 100 to 300 ms and Arabian sea has relatively fewer ports and harbours. The eastern seaboard of Arabia is over 4000 miles long but there is hardly any major port before Aden. Bushire, Bandar, Abbas and Chahban are minor harbours in south Iran, linked with the hinterland only by road. Pashni another minor port in Baluchistan which is connected by road with Kalat and Queta. Pakistan and India also have few ports in this region with good facilities for ships including dry docks. The principal seaways in this region connect Aden and the Persian Gulf to Karachi & Bombay.

The geographical boundaries of the sea have been a subject of much discussion and are not yet finally settled. Generally, the description offered by the International Hydrographic bureau is accepted. Accordingly its western boundary lies along the meridian of Cape Agulhas (20° east longitude) and also at the western coast line countries are UAE, Oman, Yemen, Aden, Somalia and north western coastal countries are Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar. The southern coastal countries are Maldives, Seychelles and Chagos Archipelago and the eastern boundary is made by the western coastal line of India.

R.C. Sharma, The Ocean Realities and Prospects, Rajesh Publications, New Delhi, P.9.

Ibid,

The Gulf of Aden, situated at the entrance of Red sea in western Arabian sea. It is the only way through which all the ships passes from east to west via Swej canal. The Gulf constantly narrow from its western end to the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, situated at the lower entrance to the Red-sea. Aden is the fuelling station for both the naval and merchant ships and is, therefore of vital strategic & geopolitical importance. Further off the Gulf of Aden, in the north is the Arabian sea.

The Gulf of Oman connects the Arabian sea with the Persian Gulf. Opposit the eastern coast of the Indian peninsula lies the triangle shaped Bay of Bengal. Thus on the different sides, the Arabian sea washes the coasts of African countries, Arabia, Iran, Pakistan and India.

There are three Archipelagos, the Laccadive, Maldiva and Chagos between the meridian's 70 and 75. The Laccadive is situated off the Malabar coast opposite Calicut in the Arabian sea. Below the Laccadives lie a group of 17 atolls and a huge number of smaller islands which together constitute the Maldiva group. More than 300 are inhabited. The chagos Archipelago lies to south of Maldiva islands. It has a total area of about 76 square miles and only about 1000 people. The only inhabite island of this group is its harbour of Diego-Garcia. It measures 13x6 mile. It is situated in the belt of tropical trade winds and has a moderate climate. It is at present under the influence of Americans, who have turned it into military base.

In the west of the Arabian sea along with the meridian 55 are

situated the islands of Schyhellis. The Archipelgo comprises of 92 islands. Male is the most important and lies 40° and 50° south latitude and 55° - 56° east longitude. It 17 mile long and 4-7 miles wide. The strategic importance of the 92 islands of scychellis is great, for they are the first land pieces on the Bombay-Africa runn.

The territory, about 200-300 kms. off the coast of Kerala, consists of a group 27 coral islands. Only 10 of which are inhabited. The total area is 32 sq.kms, the Hqs of administration are located on the Kavaratti island. The island uptill now under the influence of primative agricultural practices is undergoing changes.

The Lakshadeep group straddles international maritime route to end from the red sea Persian Gulf and the Arabian sea ports to Colombo and beyond, the outpost has immense strategic value along India's South-west flank, in crisis situation-monitoring the activities of foreign trawlers and hostile aircrafts. Moreover, these several uninhabited islands and islets along the west coast which can be used for questionable activities smuggling anti-national and other activities.

It needs to be mentioned the US multi purpose logistic base on Diego-Garcia about 1250 kms. Further south supports US CENTCOM operations in the Arabian sea Persian Gulf region. US aircrafts and worships to and from the base have been operating close to India's ocean territories. Though the moves pose no threat to India, it gives the supper power the capability of exerting pressure on India at a time of its choosing.

Arabian sea in Relation to Pakistan and India

Alfred Mahan is supposed to have said : "Whoever controls the Indian ocean dominates Asia. This ocean is the key to the seven seas. In the 21st century the destiny of the world will be decided on its waters." This statement may be exaggerated, but seems to contain some truth. From old the Indian ocean has been an arena where the rivalries of the great powers are played out.

The strategic importance of Arabian sea for India is mainly due to its geographical location. The important sea routes which traverse it, and rich natural resources of the densely populated countries on its shores. The sea routes of the Arabian sea connect by way of the Persian Gulf and Red sea. In the region are located rich natural resources, mainly wool, jute, tea, tin, rubber, gold, copper and magnesium, in addition to its most important natural resource, namely oil in the western Arabian sea. In recent years the united states, western Europ and Japan have become increasingly reliant on oil from the Persian Gulf and this dependence is likely to persist into the future. Most of these oil movements have to go through the Arabian sea.

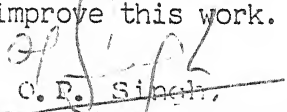
Thus, Arabian sea region has become very sensitive sea area of the world. Touching it's coast oil producing countries this area has become very important from military point of view. India's maritime boundaries are connected with Pakistan in this sea region which still have not settled. The absence of delimitation of mari-


time boundary with Pakistan a continuing irritant-is likely to create some problems. There have been frequent cases of poaching by Pakistan trawlers and fishing boats, harassment of Indian fishermen and hijacking of merchant vessels by the Pakistan Navy and its maritime security Agency in the Lakhpatt-Gkha region and off the coast of Saurashtra. In January 1988, Pakistan seized six Indian merchant vessels on way to the coast of Saurashtra from the Gulf ports, two trawlers, some fishing boats and apprehend some fishermen. In early 1988 there were 230 Indian fishermen and fishing boats in Pakistani custody, while 200 Pakistani fishermen and 20 boats illegally poaching in Indian water were in India's custody. However, as a gesture of goodwill, it was agreed on February 12, 1988 by both governments to release the boats and fishermen.

Pakistan has not approached India to delineate the maritime boundary : it seems to be interested in keeping the cauldron boiling for reason best known to it. However, given the goodwill, there can be no reason why maritime boundaries with Bangladesh and Pakistan can not be settled within the frame work of an international law on the subject. Minister of state for external affairs Natwar singh told the Lok Sabha on March 2, that India was taking steps to enter into negotiations with Pakistan for demarcation of boundary.

Instability in this maritime theatre and carving spheres of influence by outside power on western flank in Arabian sea by outside power pose a potential threat to India's Ocean territories. Such a conflict spectrum brings in sharp focus the strategic location off-shore installations and far-flung island groups. The importance

of naval defence has been enhanced by India's decision to exploit under water resources in exclusive economic zone (EEC). Defence K.C. Pant told the parliamentary committee of the defence ministry of February 18, 1988. India can ill-afford to ignore great power and their proxies or opportunistic client states amassing sophisticated weapons exacerbating tensions, shifting the focus of cold war close to its waters of geographical proximity. Despite the UN General Assembly resolution declaring the Indian^{ocean} a zone of Peace in December 1971, the great powers have stepped up their naval deployment and upgraded and created new military facilities increasing insecurity, tensions and instability on India's western flank. Finally, I will be grateful to the readers for their valuable suggestion(if any) to improve this work.


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CHAPTER I

Geo-Strategic Set-up

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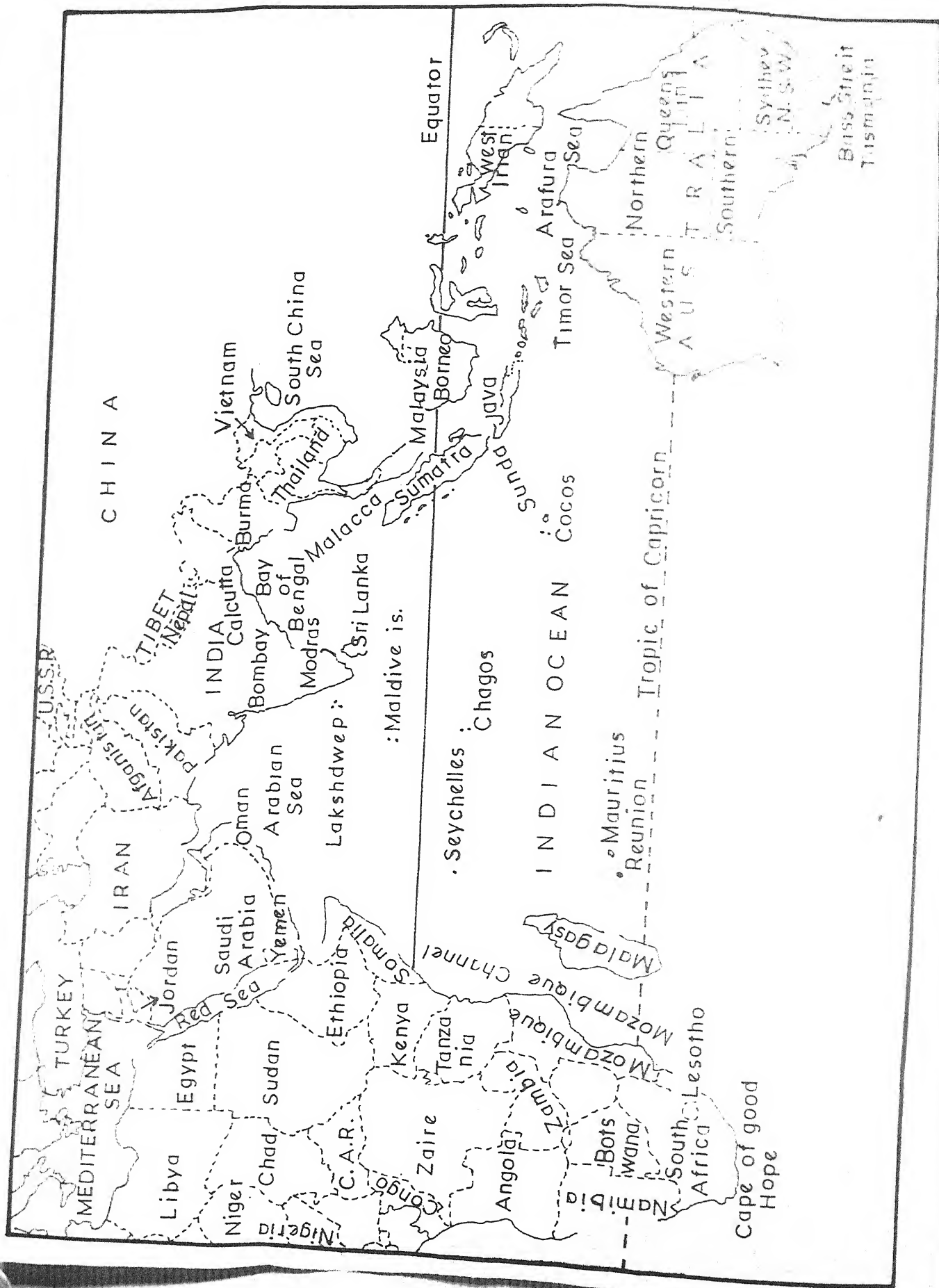
Geostrategic Set-Up

The importance of geographical facts on the development of history is only now receiving wide and general recognition. Geopolitics as a handmaid of warfare and as a guide for political programmes may be a recent pseudo science, but as early as the fourth century B.C. we have in Kautilya's Arthashastra, a definition of Chakravartipatha, boundaries and lands which should belong to any empire. Even in respect of the modern science of Geopolitics, India can claim to be a pioneer. The question of suitable land frontiers agitated the great minds of Anglo-India from the time of Warren Hastings. Lord Curzon, who gave to the question of frontiers a scientific basis and emphasised its importance as a subject worthy of serious study. Lord Curzon himself thought of the sea only as a frontier and not as a vital territorial area. Because the interposition of the sea many countries lost their interests, so India willingly agreed to part with the administration of Aden, one of the key point for the control of the oceanic area probably the north western part of Indian Ocean, i.e. Arabian sea.

If interest in the problems of the Arabian sea was absent in India itself, it is not a matter of surprise that it did not receive much attention from the writers on Geopolitics elsewhere.

Geopolitical Significance of the Area

The Middle East Politics would probably have run along its usual course, but there arrived oil. Oil was found here early in the twentieth Century, but it was not till the Arab-Israel War of 1973 that it discovered its power. It was for the first time that



the world realised what it meant to have more than half the oil reserves of our planet, to produce one third of the total world output, and to have command of oil power in a few hands. Among the 13 members of the OPEC seven are in the Middle East.¹ The great monopoly was compounded by rise in prices from 2 to over \$ 35 per barrel by 1981, threatening to escalate further and giving exporters access to finances as might inspire yet another serial of Arabian Nights. For the first time again, a developing region has had enough and to spare to develop itself.

The fundamental causes of its past weakness-lack of resources, low level of economic development, and poor education-are being rapidly remedied. Much of the old Arab ingenuity and enlightened culture is undergoing renaissance in the modern setting and one is surprised how even the smallest of the states is raising infrastructure of the highest class. There are coming up excellent communication systems, biggest refineries & fertilizer plants, nuclear reactors, desalting complexes, prosperous banks, and business houses of international fame.

Money is not all honey, while being a source of strength, it makes oil producing countries more vulnerable to internal subversion and external aggression. Unless power structure changes radically, there is no reason to suppose that the violence of the masses will not erupt. This itself is a reason for a strong, sophisticated military establishment. The flood of arms now sweeping

1. Chopra, India and the Indian Ocean, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, p. 70.

the Arabian sea states is unprecedented, exceeding even certain states of Europe in the high quality of weapons which the petrodollars can buy.² After all the ultimate purpose of arms is to enable people to fight; and in the region fighting is perennial and is likely to become a major regional and international concern.

Britain had the biggest real estate in the middle East, but with its evacuation of the Masirah base in Oman this last foothold in the region disappeared, and nothing has taken its place. No doubt there have been military alliances such as CENTO and several bilateral treaties involving Russia, the U.S.A., Iraq, the two Yemens and others.

There is enough in the region to invoke outsiders. The very nationalism is sometimes an invitation; in Oman the ruler asked for external aid to preserve the integrity of the state against guerrilla rebels. When the states are too small, lying under the shadow of giants, as on the Persian Gulf, only external props can provide assurance of security. The two powers must choose befitting friends from outside, illustrated by Saudi Arabia and Jordan leaning towards the United States and Iraq towards the Soviet Union. Oil is the dire need of technology which can come predominantly from the industrial states. Indeed oil is a commodity of such vital importance that the great powers would in any

2. Ibid, p.71.

case keep some kind of a hold on the region, no matter what the regional states say. The result is that while foreign soldiers rather thinned out and incidently they have been replaced by technicians businessmen, diplomates, strategists, intelligence agents, and traffickers in arms in numbers that far exceed anything that was ever here except during war.

The immense economic activity provides great opportunities of countries like India to invest in manpower and skill. India has infact signed several collaborative agreements with Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and smaller Gulf states, of which the Iran-Hind shipping line and extraction of Indian Iran with Iran's Petrodollers are outstanding examples. When in 1980 the Western powers imposed sanctions, it was to India that Iran turned for replenishment. India-Middle East Trade relations extend over the past two to three thousand years and have been maintained even in the midst of violent military and political upheavels. The difference to day is that trade and politics are much more inter-linked than ever before.

It is inconceivable that in the event of violent disturbances, for instance, India could be assured of supply of oil no matter how much it pays. The influence of oil power on India casts a shadow on foreign relations, armed forces, security and economic development. In so far as the oil route from the Persian Gulf to the west coast of India is concerned, the upper Arabian Sea becomes a highly sensitive sector from the viewpoint of country's over se a contacts. And so far as the source of supply is concerned, the

politics of the region, attitudes and influence of external forces have become matters of high priority in India's diplomatic life.³

If things go well, some of the old sleeping giants of the area are bound to come to life in a big way. In the past, India was one of the countries which felt the impact of Persian Imperial power, when part of its north west was conquered. Today Iran has the look of the one country with territory, population, and resources which could become a foremost state in this part of the world. Other upcoming states are Iraq and Saudi Arabia. But Iranian revolution and the ousting of a highly ambitious Shah altered the situation, while the power equation among the regional states stampeded the rise of any one particular nation to a high power status. If at present the conquest of territory is out of fashion, other forms of ascendancy as leverage of finance, competition in trade, influence at the international forums, control over communications are very much in fashion. Unless India forges ahead and its per capita resources in this respect are lower it is bound to be out paced, if not over shadowed.

In Arabian sea & recent oceanographic investigations indicate that such locative as the narrow sheef the Persian Gulf and the Red sea abound in petroleum, gold and sea food. The deep sea plains and Gulfs may be vast storehouses of sea wealth.

3. Ibid, P. 72.

This Indian Ocean region is predominantly not much more agricultural in nature, the Industrial base being still very weak. The overall food production is still inadequate and much of the vast mineral resources are still untapped. The total picture of foreign trade shows the dominance of the industrially developed countries over the littoral states. Almost 90% of the littoral trade is oriented to the U.S.A., Europe and Japan. The intra-regional trade is insignificant.

To the big powers, this region offers excellent prospects of Economic exploitation. Apart from their natural wealth, the developing countries also constitute large markets for the finished products of the industrialised nations. Inter State and inter-regional rivalries provide the big powers with opportunities to heighten the dependence of individual states on them for economic support and military assistance.

The enlarging strategic importance of the Arabian sea is evidenced by factors such as the emergence of China as a world power, the growing Japanese economic strength, the Big power rivalry for influence and technical innovations in sea warfare. The vying for political balance has given rise to an arms race in various states. In addition to fostering regional military pacts, military bases have been openly established in the area by such countries as the U.S.A. and France. The Soviet Union has consistently denied setting up bases, but finds it necessary to maintain a permanent naval presence in the sea area.

The situation in the region today is not normal but though most littoral states are independent and some have struck military alliances with outside powers and some foreign bases have been established. The trading pattern has remained overwhelmingly external rather than regional and for this reason, the entrances to the Arabian sea from the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans continue to be of crucial importance. The navies of the littoral states are weak in comparison with those of the Big powers. The new political patterns that have emerged have brought to evidence certain rivalries and conflicting interests of regional powers.

Thus, as an area of extraordinary potential for natural resources, an area crossed by trade routes vital to outside powers and those belonging to the region, an area of conflicting Big power political and economic interests and area of certain regional turbulence, the Arabian sea is a pivot of world affairs. It would, therefore, be worthwhile to examine the interests and compulsions of the various regional and extra-regional states which have brought about the present conditions.

America's economic interests in the Arabian sea have always been & still are considerable in the Post W.W. II Period U.S. Govt. statements enunciating its concepts concerning the region : "The Indian Ocean must remain available for free passage of U.S. commercial & military traffic-----,"⁴ we require air routes into

and a cross the region....." "We are particularly disquieted by the potential for instability in the Persian Gulf and what this might mean to our and allied oil interests....." And so on, ad infinitum. Her dependence on oil and other minerals and the need to secure markets for her manufactures, the U.S. is probably the most advanced in the technology and resources necessary for exploiting the vast untapped wealth of the Arabian sea. Now economic interests can seldom be divested from politics. The age old policy of the creation of spheres of influence continues, possibly as an economic necessity, but inevitably with strong political overtones. Moreover, apart from economic compulsion, there is the ideological rivalry between the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union which leads to political and economic competition. What is worse, it has also developed into a permanent military presence in the Arabian sea area.⁵ Various modern and ultra modern electronic listening, tracking and other devices are being installed on territories of allies whose base facilities are being developed and are available for use by the Americans when required. navigation & communications satellites are also based there. U.S. surveillance aircraft & cover whole of the Indian Ocean region & submarines patrol in its depths. U.S.A. poses a threat by establishing Diego Garcia base on the littoral states of Arabian sea has much more importance to them, because this base gives him staying power. Waging a conflict against countries not favourably inclined

towards the U.S.A. by using surrogates backed by U.S.A. Sea power is also a possibility in this area. At the oil-crisis, U.S.A. warned Arab oil-producing countries of armed intervention and parading during times of local crisis also. The Soviet naval presence is also a reason for the stay of U.S. Force in the area.⁶

U.S.S.R. also has her trade relations with littoral states though cannot yet compare with the U.S.A. & other western countries. U.S.S.R. may have to enter the West Asian oil trade. So she is determined to protect the oil trade routes in the area. Oil is ample reason for the U.S.S.R. to develop and expand her mutual trade with the countries of the Arabian sea littorals. The stationing of American ballistic missile submarines in the region, capable of striking at the regions of U.S.S. This threat can not be ignored by U.S.S.R. From the point of view of geographic, economic, political and military factors, it becomes apparent that the Russian presence in the area could serve a variety of aims. It could extend commercial, diplomatic and military influence in the area dominated completely by the West. It could enhance the Soviet Union's capacity to defend itself against western ballistic missile submarines and carrier task forces operating in the area. It could provide some security to the sea routes passing through the Arabian sea to the littoral countries and contribute to a policy of containing Chinese power and countering Chinese influence

in the area. It could reassure friends and further political & economic relationships. This is a part of the Big power rivalry and considered essential countervailing presence to that of the U.S.A., who otherwise exert an unbearable dominance over the area.

China's naval expansion programme all over the ocean, indicates that she has realised the necessity of sea power in areas where her vital national interests are at stake. The U.S.S.R.'s close ties with India, and the Soviet naval presence in the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, fears China constantly. China may be expected to continue supporting Pakistan. She appears to give help to anti Soviet moves by U.S.A. and others. China also wants to extend her influence far beyond her frontiers. Late Chow en Lai announced that the China have exercised greater care in their attempts to influence the countries of Africa & West Asia.⁷ This attitude is now giving way to more assertive policies, and more aggressive initiatives, to compete with or offset Soviet influence in the area.

All the important countries like Japan, Britain, France & others import large quantities of oil and raw materials for her industries and export their products on a mammoth scale to the countries of this area, therefore all are indulged to secure the oil supply routes of the Arabian sea area because now oil has

become a more valuable political weapon to the super powers, and a major economic resource to the littoral states of this area.⁸

The bulk of Pakistan's foreign trade moves by sea. About 85% of her oil comes from the Gulf and among her vital imports are ferrous and non-ferrous metals and machinery of all kinds. Her exports are cotton in various forms, rice, hides and skins and a few other materials.

Pakistan has strong bonds with certain Arab countries of the Gulf who help her with financial resources and whose armed forces she ships to man & train. During the 1971 conflict, Saudi Arabia loaned Pakistan naval hardware though at the time, she herself was not wellstocked.⁹ Since then, there has been a rapid build-up of modern military hardware in the Gulf countries, and a repetition of Saudi Arabia's 1971 policy could widen the threat to India. Pakistan's relations with Iran have been close and cordial. He helped her in the 1965 & 1971 conflicts with India and both are the members of CENTO since 1958.¹⁰ Pakistan's friendship with China has been steadfast and could be expected to continue for strategic and political reasons. The history of Pakistan's relations with India is well known. It present attempts to nor-

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malise relations succeed, the foundation can soon be laid for very fruitful, peaceful cooperation between these two countries, whose ethnic, economic, and linguistic affinities lend themselves to reciprocal friendship.

Pakistan has strengthened her defence services and appears to be indulging in an arms race with India. She spends a high percentage of her budget on defence and may be working towards Mr. Bhutto called the "finest Armed forces in Asia."¹¹ Her defence budget has doubled since 1971 and the development of her navy is proceeding according to plan. Pakistan voted for the zone of peace concept in the U.N. but her policies indicate only half hearted support for it. She is still a member of CENTO and in 1973 conference, she demanded that the role of CENTO be revised in the light of what she called the close Soviet relationship with Iraq and India and the alleged Soviet support of certain insurgencies in various west Asian countries.¹² This attitude is in the interest of the Big powers such as the U.S.A. & Britain and the possibilities it offers them in terms of their military presence in the Arabian sea area and the whole Indian Ocean.

Iran regards her Arabian sea role as an extension of her role in the Gulf. Her rapid naval development along the most

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role in the Gulf. Her rapid naval development along the most sophisticated lines indicates her determination to be a strong, dominant Arabian sea Power. Whereas her land forces could be involved in border defence, it is the sea that is given prime importance in her defence blueprints because her lifeblood her trade depends on it.

The development of oil ports outside the Shatt-el-Arab has given Iran greater strategic flexibility and security. Big military bases are under construction at Bandar Abbas and Char Bahar, and the occupation of the strategic Tumb islands and Abu Musa at the entrance to the Gulf has been attributed to the determination to prevent, at all costs, the blockading of the Strait of Hormuz.¹³ Till before some times the U.S. surveillance aircraft used Iranian airfields and ships to the naval bases whose infrastructure is largely of American origin. All this was done to establish her influence in the area. Iran has relations with U.S.S.R. also. Soviet intentions & ability to establish influence in this area are very well known to counter the U.S.A. & Though Shah has stated that Big powers should keep out of the area and that its security should be the responsibility of the littoral states. Iran's dealings with Iraq have improved in the recent past and their long lasting feud is being played in a very low key. This is an important development and if the rapprochement holds, it could be of

the region. It is believed that Saudi Arabia & Kuwait's military build-up is aimed at keeping Iran from appearing as cock of the wall. Iran's oceanic policy declare that upto 1967 she was only on looker, from 1967-1971 she took initiatives to establish her supremacy in the Gulf in the wake of the reduction in the British presence in the region, and from 1971 onwards, she has openly voiced her aspirations to power in the region in a determined move to secure the safety of her trade routes. Iran has sponsored an agreement with India for the supply of iron ore, and has expounded ideas on an Asian common Market and freedom of trade & navigation. Indo-Pak conflict of 1971 and Arab-Israeli war of 1973 affect the Iran's supremacy in this area and also her relations with India, U.S.A. & U.S.S.R. influenced from the above events. So this area becomes again a significant area from the point of view of establishing the influence by super powers and imposing their strategic will upon those who are the friends of them.

India is wary of sea threats emanating mainly from Pakistan and the problems of the Arabian sea tended to be overlooked. Some concern was generated when Pakistani warships bombarded Dwarka in the 1965 conflict but damage caused insignificant instead of a attack on India's maritime interests. India's relations with Pakistan have haunted the regional scene since Independence and have erupted into open hostilities several times. Today wider issues are at stake. India is consious with growing Big powers

rivalry and tensions in the area. India has endeavoured to solve outstanding issues with her neighbours and has succeeded in some cases. India tries to strengthening cultural & economic ties with the countries of this area. Some western countries rumoured that India has granted base facilities to the Russians at certain ports on her mainland & outlying islands. But it is true that western warships have enjoyed more time than Russia. It should be clear to the world that India values her independence and is determined to stand her ground. Whatever the obstacles, that India concerned over the defence of her maritime interests, has no desire to exert a predominant influence in the area. She opposes the concept of any one power dominating it. So the above desires & considerations show the significance of the area.

Though India geographically dominates the Arabian sea. After 1947 India has mainly been confronted with wars and frontier disputes in landlocked areas to its north and west with little possibility for developing a systematic policy in the Arabian sea which has also been clamor compared to the Himalayas or the desert wastes of the west. India is particularly not a seafaring nation. Maritime tradition is mainly confined to the coastal regions of the country.

There is no unified political pattern in the Arabian sea area and whether it is in the west or east, the political postures vary greatly from the diversified politics of Oman and Yemen, to those of India and Pakistan in the east. Today without being more

energetic and forceful, India can not provide protection to its coasts of the area.

The western coastline of India stretches from the Gulf of Kutch in the northwest down the Malabar coast of Cape Comorin. There are several important ports and naval establishments including Bombay, and Cochin where shipyard is being built. Three important sectors of the coast-Bombay to the Pakistan border, the Goa coast in the central sector, and Cochin on the Malabar coast in the southern zone, helps India project to three different sectors of the Arabian sea. Unlike the Bay of Bengal, India has no broken coastline nor other neighbouring nations to deal with on its western front. India's own oil route from the Persian Gulf is through the Arabian sea, and it has important trading links with middle east states, particularly Persian Gulf countries. Despite the obvious stability arising out of a mercantile relationship, nearly all the countries of the Persian Gulf area, including Iran, have adversary attributes for India, expressed through solidarity with Pakistan in times of conflict. India's own efforts at maintaining a pivotal role in the Arabian sea should be through increased naval strength. The benefits of a long coastline could only be made effective use of it there were a proper naval force to take advantage of the strategic benefits that a coastline has to offer.

The same disadvantage that India faces as a result of a wide open sea it has to protect, works to its advantage when viewed

from the distance that a possible adversary would have to cover in case of a conventional attack. The breadth of the Arabian sea serves the purpose of a defensive shield. It is the north western part of the sea which is the most sensitive for India, as it is there that it shares a Coastline with Pakistan & Iran. In 1971 Indo-Pak conflict, this was an area of naval action between Pak and Indian Navies. A future naval conflict between the two countries would be of a more sophisticated nature and with greater destructive possibilities on both sides. Iran has been stepped up political, military and economic cooperation with Pakistan. There have also been recent attempts at establishing a non-Arab Islamic alliance between Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. Iran involves in Baluchi and Pukhtuni movements also and Pakistan opposed the movement. India's military predominance in the region also gives Pakistan a shielding role between Iran & India while would not be possible if Pakistan ceased to exist as a country or existed in a greatly truncated form Iran has as a result of these factors poured military & economic aid to Pakistan making it a constant threat to India. It is also in Tehran's interest to see a Pakistan which can combat India. Iran's ambitions in the Arabian sea one of dominating the north western quadrant nevertheless go against India's interests. It is certain that India will not assume a role whereby it will mainly be a coastline power while Iran dominates the Arabian sea from the coasts of the Horn of Africa and Oman to India. It would appear that there is quite rivalry between Iran and India to maintain naval supremacy in the region.

Linking India's Arabian sea coast with that of Bay of Bengal is what could be considered a curve which moves from Cochin in the west to Palk strait, separating the northern tip of Sri Lanka from the Cromandel coast of India, in the east. This area commands access to the central Indian Ocean particularly Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

This area is likely to grow in sensitivity in the future particularly in light of India's ability to build up a naval potential which can make an impact in all directions of the Ocean and not just in areas adjoining the coasts. While the Arabian sea has Indian fleet deployments and coastal naval establishments, this region due to the sensitivity has not been left undeveloped. With the building of Cochin as a modern naval establishment it may become possible for India to give more attention to the Maldives - Sri Lanka region. The deployment in the Chagos Archipelago the pressure has grown up and the possibility of Big power naval presence in the Seychelles and Maurities and the British withdrawal from Gan make the southern half of the Indian Peninsula vulnerable. This is also an area where India to take special interest being just off its coast due to the establishment of Diego Garcia base by U.S.A. with a power vacuum in the Maldives and increased sensitivity in the central zone, this area has become more significant to India, because several countries have already negotiated port facilities at Maurities and several countries have made a bid for Gan. An area of relative neglect the Ocean from Gan to the Indian coastline is crisscrossed with Ocean

routes moving from Suez to Singapore. From an Indian perspective it provides a most between Diego Garcia & Soviet mid ocean anchorages and the south Asian subcontinent. This area covering Cochin Minicoy, Gan & Colombo will be looked at as a geopolitical unit in the Indian Ocean developments. Its relevance for India will be examined. This area is bound to the northwestern quadrant by the Laccadive Islands which provide a shield to the Indian coast in the southern Arabian sea. Kalpeni, Southern most Laccadive islands is good sentinel for Indian base in this area which 150 miles opposite to Cochin. From here India can commence the activities to encounter the actions through Diego Garcia. It is 260 nautical miles from Calicut also, can be developed for strategic purposes. There are so many Islands as Minicoy, in the area has significant strategic situation. This is linked with the direct lanes from Africa to East Asia, Colombo to Aden and Bombay. It is a possible stop on the long journey from Europe to the Far East. It is under India's influence and deserves greater attention by New Delhi for its developments. The strategic axis moves from Cochin-Minicoy towards Male & Gan So Both are also important for India.

precipitation of $10,000 \text{ km}^3$ and run off of 525 km^3 from the rivers of India and Pakistan. Arabian sea covers only about 7% of the total area of the Indian ocean. It receives 23.9% of total precipitation and run-off.⁵ Arabian sea, in fact, occupies only 1.5% of the world oceanic area but receives 9% of the global river run-off. The Arabian sea, a vast expanse, separating the two peninsulas of India and Arabia and also bounded on the north by the barren coast of Persia is one of the vital seas of the world.

The northern boundary of the Arabian sea is land locked and it receives waters of high salinity from the Gulf and the Red sea. The Gulf water flows through the Hormuz strait which has a maximum sill-depth of about 100 m while the Red sea water flows through the strait of Bab-el-Mandab with a maximum sill-depth of 125m.⁶ These are the only two water masses of the Arabian sea which originates from the north. The presence of the Gulf and the Red sea water masses have been traced all over the Arabian sea upto the equator and into the western part of the Bay of Bengal. The Gulf water can be identified in the depth range 100 to 300 m. of the Arabian sea. The water from the Red sea can be traced by 400 and 900 m. depth in the Arabian sea. (Rochford 1964, Wooster et al 1967). Apart from these two other surface water masses are formed in the Northern Indian Ocean. These included a high salinity surface water in the Northern and central Arabian sea formed due to excess of evaporation there and this water mass is present upto a depth of about 125 m. (Rochford 1964).

5. R.C. Sharma : The Oceans Realities and prospects (Rajesh Publications, New Delhi) Page 9.

6. Ibid., p. 9.

Ivanenkov and Gubin (1960) termed the water mass between 100 and 300 m. as the North Indian Ocean i.e. Arabian sea region, deep water with a Sigma-t of 27.6, and the water mass below 3000 m with a Sigma-t 27.8 as the North Indian Ocean Bottom Water.

The Arabian sea is a fascinating sea, important to the great pacific in its wealth of lovely islands. It is situated between two political worlds : On the one hand are the U.S.S.R. and her a neighbour, The China and on the other hand, the U.S.A. and Britain. For the Big Powers, the military and commercial significance of the various islands and ports scattered in the Arabian sea has increased with the passage of time.⁷

The strategic location of the Arabian sea itself exposes it to big power rivalry, with the intensification of this rivalry. The littoral states feel all the more threatened : they are acutely aware of the vulnerability of their coasts because of which colonialism had made inroads into them, and they dread a repetition of the colonial experience.

It was by defeating her rivals on the sea one after the other that England had gained mastery of the world. The British naval policy in the Asia stemmed from her necessity to dominate the seas in order to maintain her colonial domains. The trade routes through the mediterranean and the Arabian sea to India, Australia and China.were of great importance to Britain.

7. V.K. Bhasin : Super Power rivalry in the Indian Ocean (S.Chand and Company Ltd., New Delhi, Page 18.

The Arabian sea has relatively fewer ports and harbours. The eastern seaboard of Arabia is over 4000 miles long, but there is hardly any major port before Aden in Arabia. Muscat, a port of Oman and the Persian Gulf, ports of Kuwait and Abadan have acquired immense importance because of the oil industries there. Bushire, Bandar-Abbas and Chahban are minor harbours in south Iran, linked with the hinterland only by road. Pashni another minor port in Baluchistan is also connected by road with Kalat and Quetta. Pakistan and India also have few ports in this region with good facilities for ships including dry docks. The principal sea ways in this region connect Aden and the Persian Gulf to Karachi, Bombay and others.

Boundaries :

In case of the Indian subcontinental shallow water plateforms face its west and east coasts. To the west, in the Arabian sea, it is widest off Bombay, about 200 miles. South of Bombay it narrows down substantially, over widths of 20 to 60 miles, right down to Kanya Kumari, the depths are under 500 feet. With its long coastline, India has a continental shelf of impressive dimensions. This is going to be the scene of India's major maritime activity for several years to come, because of economic, political and military reasons.⁸

The western leg of Indian ocean is Arabian sea includes Iran,

Iraq, Southi Arabia, United Arab Amirates and the African continent, Pakistan, and Afghanistan and Western Coast of India and its islands. Arabian sea is a major constituents of Indian Ocean. The Indian subcontinent is flanked by two plains, in the Arabian sea and the Bay of Bengal, each at the depths of 10 to 15 thousand feet. The Arabian sea plain is associated with the Indus river. When we talking about the Arabian sea, we must have a close look at its extent and size. This north-west part of the Indian Ocean is known as 'British Lake'. The Western part of this British lake i.e. Arabian sea rounds Arabia and part of the African coast, was called the Erythrean sea. This name and division was discarded as a result of centuries of exploration and surveys and political changes.

The geographical boundaries of the sea have been a subject of much discussion and are not yet finally settled. Generally, the description offered by the International Hydrographic Bureau is accepted. Accordingly its western boundary lies along the meridian of cape Agulhas (20° east longitude) and also at the western coast line countries are U.A.E., Oman, Yemen, Aden, Somalia and Kenya and the North-Western coastal countries are Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the Southern coastal countries are Lakshadweep, Maldives, Scycheles and Chagos Archipelago and the eastern boundary is made by the western coastal line of India. The northern boundary includes the Persian Gulf and the Red sea upto 30° N Latitude when a narrow strip separates it from the Meditterra-

nean.⁹

The Arabian sea is wide and extensive covering the area from the Horn of Africa to the west to Cochin and Sri Lanka in the east. It washes the coasts of Yemen Oman and a small eastern portion of Iran, Pakistan lies to its north. India, its largest littoral states, provides as it were a solid land mass on its eastern front.¹⁰

In the South of the Arabian sea is the continent of Africa, to the north Asia and to the deep south Antarctica. The Gulf of Aden, situated in the north-east of the region, is the funnel through which pass all the sea routes from the east to Europe via the Suez canal.¹¹ The Gulf constantly narrows from its western end to the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, situated at the lower entrance to the Red sea. Aden is a fuelling station for both the naval and merchantships and is, therefore, of vital strategic importance. Further off the Gulf of Aden, in the north, is the Arabian sea. In the north-west, the Arabian sea juts into the Persian Gulf. The Gulf of Oman connects the Arabian sea with the Persian Gulf. Opposite the eastern coast of the Indian Peninsula lies the triangle shaped Bay of Bengal. Thus on different sides, the Arabian sea washes the coasts of African countries, Arabia, Iran, Pakistan and India. Arabian sea is connected with the Gulf of Aden, Persian

9. R.C. Sharma : The Oceans, realities & prospects, p.

10. R. Gupta : The Indian Ocean (Marwah Publications, New Delhi-110016), P. 76.

11. V.K. Bhasin : S. Power Rivalry in the Indian Ocean (Sterling Publishers, New Delhi), p.9.

Gulf and Gulf of Oman and being linked with Indian Ocean is also connected with the Mozambique channel and other straits situated in the Indian Ocean both the sides of west and East. When the Suez Canal was closed, the European ships coming via Cape Town passed through the nearby Mozambique channel in order to reach the oil rich Arab countries and farther east.

There are three Archipelagos-the Laccadive, Maldiva and Chagos between the meridians 70 and 75. The Laccadive is situated off the Malabar coast opposite Calicut in the Arabian sea. Below the Laccadives lie a group of 17 atolls and a huge number of smaller islands which together constitute the Maldiva group. More than 300 are inhabited. The Chagos Archipelago lies to the south of Maldiva islands.¹² It has a total area of about 76 square miles and only about 1000 people. The only inhabited island of this group is its harbour of Diego Garcia. It measures 13 x 6 miles. It is situated in the belt of tropical trade winds and has a moderate climate, high winds are rare and water is fresh. It is at present under the influence of Americans, who have turned it into a military base. It forms an ideal base site.

In the west of the Indian Ocean along with the meridian 55 are situated the islands of Seychelles. The Archipelago comprises of 92 islands. Mahe being the most important and lies between 4° and 5°S latitude and 55° & 56°E. longitude. It is 17 mile long and 4-7 miles wide. The strategic importance of the 92 islands

12. Ibid, p. 15.

of Seychelles is great, for they are the first land pieces on the Bombay-Africa run.

The island of Socotra lies at the entrance of the Gulf of Aden. Its former name was Sukhadhara and the Portuguese changed it to Socotra. It was well known to the Greeks, Romans, Arabs and Egyptians. Britain acquired it from the Portuguese at the time of the opening of the Suez canal. As such, they can protect the Indo-Pak subcontinent against a surprise attack, although their different political entities would pose problems in military coordination in the event of war in this area.¹³

The Suez canal is the gateway to the Arabian sea from the west. Some of the strategically important gulfs of the Arabian sea are the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, Aden, Suez, Aqaba and Combay and Strait of Hormuz.

Environmental Aspect

The Unique feature of the north-west region of the Indian Ocean is that the surface circulation reverses every half year, from north-east during the winter monsoon to south-east during the summer monsoon. This phenomenon makes the region a very suitable area to study the sea.

Wyrtki (1973) has identified three distinct large scale circulation systems in the Indian Ocean region namely 1. The seasonally

13. Ibid, p. 11.

changing monsoon gyre north of 10° S, 2. The southern hemispheric subtropical anticyclonic gyre and 3. The Antarctic waters with the circumpolar current.¹⁴

During the south-west monsoon the south equatorial current becomes stronger. This current subsequently forms the East African coastal current and flow northwards ending up as the Somali current which frequently attains a velocity as strong as the other western boundary currents, e.g. Gulf Stream or the Kuroshio (Warren et al 1966). The monsoon current, the south equatorial current and the Somali current forms a strong wind driven gyre in the equatorial Indian Ocean region. This gyre then breaks down in a series of large gyres in the Arabian sea (During 1970). The resultant upwelling along the Somali coast is most intense between 5° N and 11° N, where the entire warm surface layer is removed and the subsurface water with temperatures well below 20° C reaches the sea surface.¹⁵

Strong winds blow also parallel to the Arabian coast, east of 55° E during the south-west monsoon and cause upwelling. This upwelling is different from the Somali upwelling because in this no strong current develops. In the South-west monsoon season a weak upwelling has been reported from the east coast of India (Varadachari & Sharma 1967). Along the west coast of India, however,

14. *Op cit.* p. 10.

15. *Op cit.* p. 11.

the subsurface water comes very close to the surface, which has been taken as upwelled water.¹⁶

The hydrographic structure of the Antarctic waters flowing into the Indian Ocean is very similar to those occurring in the Atlantic and the Pacific. It is governed by the surfacing of the main thermocline and by the strong deep reaching circumpolar current forming the major bulk of the Indian Ocean deep and bottom water flowing north-ward.

Climatic Conditions

The very fact that the Arabian sea is flanked by Asia to its north upsets the usual system of ocean winds. North of the equator is the region of the monsoons. The direction of the monsoons is south-west in the Arabian sea, down as far as the Mozambique Channel, and it is north-east in the Arabian sea and the Bay of Bengal. Thus Arabian sea usually has a tropical climate which ensures a smooth sailing from Aden to Colombo. The winds are especially conducive to deep water sailing on account of the regularity with which they direction according to season. The Monsoons are the most distinctive feature of the Indian Ocean region. The alternate heating and cooling of the immense land tract of Asia give rise to seasonal changes in temperature and atmospheric pressure. Certain areas in the Arabian sea are visited by violent tropical storms which took a heavy toll of ships in the past and can at time prove

16. Op.cit, p. 11.

dangerous even to modern steam ships. The strategic implication of the climate of the region is that, generally, military operations are best undertaken between October and April. There is either intense heat or heavy rains during the rest of the year.¹⁷

17. *Op cit.* p. 15.

Arabian Sea in Relation to India and Pakistan

Arabian sea is most important sea for India and Pakistan strategically. After Independence three wars have been fought between India and Pakistan. During these wars the role of navy was played in 1971 War. In 1965 when Pakistan attacked India, navy was directed not to safeguarding India's coastline and protecting the country's maritime trade.

In 1971, however, when hostilities once again broke out between India and Pak the navy was permitted to adopt a strategy aimed at immediately wresting the initiative from the aggressor, and it lost no time in doing so. On the night of Dec. 4, a composite force of missile boats and other surface ships struck Karachi.

There was a total blockade of the Pak's ports in the Arabian sea. This blockade prevented any reinforcements of men and material from reaching the Pakistani army in the then East Pakistan. On the western sea board, it resulted in the complete stoppage of supplies, including the much-needed petroleum products, to Karachi. This was factor that reduced the fighting capacity of Pakistan forces and led to an early termination of the War. This was the Arabian sea through which such type of action had to do.

Another important result of the navy's successful prosecution of trade warfare, was that it had a direct world wide impact, Manufacturers, exporters, shipowners, shipcrews and insurance, Banking and other financial institutions concerned with trade with India and Pakistan were inextricably involved in the outcome of the war

at sea and were therefore exposed and more influenced by our victory at sea than by our successes on land and in the air. The course of war at sea in 1971 underlined the lessons of history and military geography. India's need for sea power was re-established in the eyes of the nation and the navy's pride received a great fillip. India's own use of the seas to secure victory was a lesson - 'a lesson in the value of sea power'. Pakistan, with a long open coast unprotected by islands and one single ranking harbour, is undoubtedly in a vulnerable position.

The coastal area of Arabian sea is most sensitive and vulnerable both for India and Pakistan, because most of the trade routes are passing through this area and helping to make strong economic position. Pakistan depends heavily upon foreign trade, which mostly pelagic, moves through Karachi.¹⁸ It is true that there are no hostile shores opposing her coast line but the proximity of Karachi to Indian waters only emphasises the disadvantages of the objective conditions. An additional factor is the existence of a single road-cum-rail system going up country on both sides of the Indus river, a system which can be described as Pak's umbilical cord.

This type of unfavourable situation evidently calls for vigorous remedial measures. Short falls in the past were the result of the limitations of Pakistan's resources. These restraints will remain for a long time. All the same it is necessary to redress this position and cast around for ways and means to do so.

18. Strategic Digest, Dec. 1977. p.

This means that Pak has to develop its naval strength with fixed objectives in view. Whether it can marshal the resources to fit the desired objective can not be said off hand, but even if the task appears impossible, the goal has to be pointed out. At any rate, the fact that Pakistan operates under material constraints has to be kept in mind.

A power vacuum has appeared in the Arabian sea after the withdrawal of the British presence from the east of Suez. This attracts potential and foreign naval activities which are increasing. The Soviet Union & United States are probing this sea. Iran is raising its naval strength, not merely to the level required inside the Persian Gulf, but to a capacity enabling its reaching into the Arabian sea. India is making a bid for naval supremacy after the decline of the Indonesian Navy.¹⁹

For Pakistan, the presence of these four different naval interests hold complications. It had merely to consider its position vis-a-vis India. Now it has two super powers at its doorsteps and Iran into the bargain, a power which stands in a class of its own, drawing considerable weight in the Arabian sea. Pakistan can not aspire at holding its own against a super power. Iran's build up poses problems for India rather than for Pakistan. Here it suffices to make the basic assumption that it is India which Pakistan has to face.

19. Ibid, p. 39.

The protection of our coastline and outlying islands embraces the effective defence of our ports, harbours, and naval bases. The protection of our off-shore interests involves the safeguarding of our legitimate exploitation of our off-shore wealth. The protection of our sea lines of communication implies the defence of our merchant shipping and where necessary, the provision of safe passage to neutral vessels willing to continue trade with us during periods of stress or conflict.

The prosperity and well being of a maritime country or a country dependent on imports are closely linked with the successful operation of its merchant ships and the ability to use the seas freely-Pakistan is one of those countries who is mostly dependent on import. It must be recognised that almost 95% of the world's trade moves by ships, because air transport of goods and passengers is much faster but the costs incurred are prohibitive and air freight of the volume of cargo carried by sea today is unthinkable in the foreseeable future.²⁰ Her future is dependent on the freedom of this vast water surface.

India today imports several commodities essential for her survival and development through Arabian sea. In respect to Pakistan further naval development is unnecessary and all that is required modernization and replacement. In 1971 war the whole navy was then concentrated in the western wing, leaving only a few

20. S.N. Kohli, Sea Power and the Indian Ocean, The Hill Publishing House Company Ltd. New Delhi, p. 46.

units, which were not capable to give the Indian Navy even token resistance, and were mainly assigned to patrolling duties in the east. Even then, the Pak navy could not prevent Indian missile boats from attacking Karachi twice. Because of its poor reconnaissance system the Indian flotilla, after its first strike at Karachi, could move westward without being detected, and return later on to deliver a second blow. To get after this experience that Pakistan does not need much of a navy is to desert the realm of realism. India faces the challenges on different portions of its coastline in a separate manner.

The view that Pak navy is underdeveloped has there much to command itself, and the need to consider the role that must be assigned to it in war can not be questioned. There are several possible objectives which can be aimed at; they have to be considered one by one. It must be understood as an underlying principle, while doing so, that these objectives are by no means mutually exclusive; to a large extent they are complementary.

The first objective is merely the protection of Pakistan's shores against attacks. The second is to secure tanker traffic to and from the Gulf. Since Pakistan depends upon the import of oil and its products, their flow in war must be ensured countries friendly to Pakistan may, in times of war, offer benevolent neutrality and assistance short of military involvement in the conflict. The 3rd objective is to secure Pak's overseas trade passing through the Suez canal.²¹ This requires freedom of traffic upto

21. Ibid, p.40

the Bab-el-Mandeb and the absence of hostile influence in the northern tier of the Arabian sea.

The fourth objective is to ensure the freedom of trade with East African countries. This means a considerable extension of the commitments envisaged earlier. The fifth objective is to safeguard Pakistan's links with the far East, this being especially important in view of its ties with the Peoples Republic of China.

The basic principle of warfare alongwith this is that the first task is to inflict maximum damage on the enemy. The infliction of damage to the largest possible extent, whatever the objective chosen, must be its integral part. This means that Pakistan has to think in terms of taking naval operations into the Arabian sea. Submarine attacks in those waters are within the realm of the feasible, provided the means to do so are required.

The protection of civilian targets against enemy action of any type is primarily the task of the civilian population which must be trained, equipped and organised for the purposes; only installations belonging to the armed forces themselves should normally be defended by them against enemy attacks. This principle has to be applied to sea-war defences. Only a limited number of installations belonging to the armed forces can be founded close to the shore, sufficiently close to be assigned to the navy for defence in the event of war. The task now is to determine the objectives for which the navy has to be tailored and to assess the means that subserve best the option once exercised.

There is an important consideration which has to be kept in

view, naval acquisitions take long from the time they are ordered to the date when they become operational.

Establishments of the defence services located on or close to the shore, so close at any rate that they are accessible to naval attack, can be protected by guns and missiles both surface-to-surface and surface-to-air. This type of weaponry is also suitable for the protection of civilian targets.

The effective protection of the shores must reach out to the sea; in the first instance for purposes of reconnaissance with aircraft, patrol boats and impressed civilian craft, with anti-submarine helicopters, with aircraft capable of striking at war, equipped with air-to-surface missiles. To prevent the enemy to reach his targets, the more his attacks will be blunted. It is therefore necessary to stretch out to the enemy harbours in order to attack his war in their own waters. The economy will be affected by the naval activities and this activity can impel him to divert some of his naval strength from offensive to defensive measures. It almost draws Pak into it. As yet it depends upon the import of oil and oil products. It is therefore necessary to ensure the supply of oil from the Gulf and this is the reason for forming the second objective. The supply of military stores and ammunition through the good offices of countries prepared to support Pakistan in an armed conflict. In the event it would be upto Pak to bring in such stores from friendly port. At a first glance this appears to be an extension of the first objective of pushing sea-war defences further

out, as far west as the strait of Hormuz.²¹

The objective of keeping safe the passage of tankers and other ships can be ensured by greater strength at sea and in the air providing thereby better protection of civilian targets. As long as the enemy can interdict the movement into Karachi of ship coming from the Gulf, it has a stronghold on Pakistan's industries and transport system. Pakistan's stocks of oil and of oil products can last only for a short time. There is no need of damaging Pak's network of communications and its industries but only the blockade of Karachi is necessary to damage the above network.²²

The moment Pakistan acquires the capability of ensuring the flow of oil and other supplies from the Gulf, the picture changes profoundly. If the flow of oil into Karachi can not be effectively stopped, it will become necessary to inflict heavy damage on the port, the distributive channels and the users. This will drive the enemy into expanding his airforces and missile capability.

India is capable of blockading Karachi as long as Pakistan stays with the first of the objectives defined earlier. It does not need to do more than to fight a war of attrition; that is, attrition of the Pakistan's oil reserves and other warlike supplies. Once they are reduced to the point of exhaustion, either Pakistan folds up or a settlement is arrived at through the good

21. Ibid, p. 42.

22. Ibid, p. 42.

offices of some big power or powers on the enemy's terms. He can carry through offensives by air and by land, not to achieve any strategic or tactical gains on the ground, but force Pakistan into consuming its reserves of oil and to curtail its defensive capacity.

Pakistan acquires the wherewithal to run the blockade of Karachi and to secure the approaches to the Gulf. It is no more feasible for the enemy to impel Pakistan into exhausting its strategic reserves. Pakistan can count upon benevolent neutrals to ease the problems of the supply of the essentials of war. Warfare becomes then much more extensive, and correspondingly costlier for the enemy. In order to bring fighting to a successful conclusion, it can increase its army and airforce and opt thereby for an escalation of war; or can add to naval potential to reinforce Karachi's defences.

The means which can be poured into an armament race are limited. He will lay greater stress on one rather than try to strike an even balance. The first possibility is likely to lead to a longer conflict. It would also leave the enemy exposed to submarine warfare, and this especially as an expansion of Pakistan's underwater capability would be an integral part of achieving the second of its objectives. The blockade of Karachi will ensure a quick end of the war on terms favourable to the enemy.

Extraneous presences in the Arabian sea impose limitations upon local hegemonistic intentions. The stronger such a local

navy, the more an extraneous power has to put into the area to makes its weight felt. For outside powers, problems of logistics are much more complicated and expensive than for a regional state. In the game of showing the flag, some of the local powers enjoy a decided advantage, which support their diplomatic efforts in acquiring greater sympathy for their point of view in regional affairs.

None of the local powers can compete with a superpowers, despite some logistical advantage in the Afro-Asian Ocean but they can meet each other's growing might. Iran has strengthened its naval position in the Gulf and is now stretching out into the Arabian sea. In a few years from now, Iran's presence in it will count for much, apart from the fact that Iran can give Pakistan effective help in war.²³ Iran's notable presence in that sea is not acceptable to India. To India, an Iranian build-up in the Arabian sea is much worse than the naval presences of the superpowers. But India has at least the wherewithal to meet Iran at sea.

Truely it would be at great cost to its economy. The growth of Iran's sea power impels it into such a course even without any cause attributable to Pakistan. A strong flottila of submarines, coastal Craft, strike aircraft, an anti-submarine system only can protect tanker traffic between Karachi and the Gulf.²⁴ A substantial build-up will impell the enemy into a more vigorous naval programme, and inevitably Pakistan will have to join the race. The

23. Ibid, p.43.

24. Ibid, p.43.

change of objective imposes upon the strategy considerations that alter its very quality. What is then the shape of the two navies in the event ?

Pakistan Pushes into Indian home waters a powerful flotilla of long and medium range submarines. India counters them with strengthened anti-submarine defences. Pakistan acquires bombers fitted with air-to surface missiles so that they can attack Indian ships, while staying out of the range of their air defence; India adds an aircraft carrier capable of packing jet fighters to neutralise the bombers.

Pakistan acquires destroyer and frigates fitted with missiles to meet Indian ships probing the sea lanes between Karachi and the strait of Hormuz and to provide escorts for tankers as well as for other ships; India increases its surface strength to stay one punch ahead. India augments her underwater strength to attack shipping. Pakistan adds to submarine defences in the coastal belt.

India expands its air force so as to interdict the flow of oil, not merely into Karachi, but up-country as well, with the capacity to wreck destruction on industrial installations. The war at sea extends now to the air and to the land, with the principal burden falling on the Navy.

The acquisition of an offensive capacity draws Pakistan's purposes further out from her shores. The ability to keep the Indian Navy from the straits of Hormuz and their approaches cannot be encompassed by a protective screen reaching out that many

nautical miles. War at sea is essentially a war of movements. Pakistan's objective, that of mere protection of its shores, has but little built in offensive capacity. The weaponry needed for it is not adequate. Since it is basically accepted that action in war is primarily aimed at doing maximum damage to the enemy, offensive capacity will be used to the greatest possible extent. Physically it becomes feasible to stretch further is required merely for protection of the approaches to the straits of Hormuz. The Pakistan Navy will inexorably be drawn further out, and just as inexorably it will stretch its protective activities to the Bab el Mandab, in order to secure the freedom of passage of merchantmen. In terms of prolonged war the civil-defence should be maintained and expanded. The inflow of warlike stores has to be ensured. This demands that the freedom of shipping to and from the Suez canal is safeguarded.

A long war requires of Pakistan to secure the whole of the northern section of the Afro-Asian Ocean, all the sea space located on the north of a line drawn from the Peninsula of Kutch to the Horn of Africa.

The protection of Pakistan's tanker traffic to and from the Persian Gulf will impel India into a naval build up which Pakistan has to match. Any increment to Pakistan's strength so as to ensure the passage of merchantmen between Karachi and the Bab-el-Mandab will only intensify the naval race. Since Pakistan is economically a weak country so it has to look for ways and means to redress the unfavourable balance. Its coast line runs for over 700 km which

it has to dominate and it starts to ahead of India for this security building of base facilities is necessary.

The assessment of navy ~~by~~ by Pakistan during the dynamic sea war which is now prevailed in the modern concept, is not possible to dominate the sea lanes to the Bab el Mandab. With the strong naval force it is not possible to ensure the freedom of trade with the countries of East Africa. Communications between Pakistan and the ports on the eastern seaboard of Africa are short and direct. Trade can, therefore, develop readily. The imports & exports of African countries will also be affected in times of war of sea.²⁵ Yet, that area will like to purchase Pakistani capital goods only if there is an assurance that the capital goods and the spare parts will be available in war.

The safeguarding of Pakistan's sea communications with the Far East can not be approached without Indian Mercy. No doubt Pakistan's sea connection with the china is very important. Against this stands the fact that it has to skirt the whole of India, all the time remaining exposed to Indian action on the surface, below it, and also above it.

The protection of the sea lanes connecting Karachi with the straits of Hormuz implies Pakistan into the concept of the totality of war without reservation and ensuring the safety of movement to and from the Bab el Mandab. This amounts really to an effective

25. Ibid, p.45

pressure in the northern sector of the Arabian sea from kutch to the eastern tip of Somalia. With this it becomes possible to afford protection to trade with the East African seaboard. Since India can not allow Iran's build-up to go unchallenged, the armament race is an even without any provocation being offered by Pakistan, and Pakistan has already an option but to join it.

Pakistan's long coast-line by the area that has to be secured can be dotted with bases for the navy-at a price, but it is intended to pay. Pakistan's ships and aircraft will under these conditions be able to carry greater pay loads than their Indian adversaries, and their turn around time will be much shorter. This is of utmost importance since in this fashion Pakistan can match the Indian numbers with a lesser strength. It is feasible for Pakistan to dominate the air space in front of its coast for beyond the line we have drawn by means of a strong land based fleet air arm. Its aircraft can enter into this space from various directions. Whatever India can muster for detection it can not prevent the aircraft from operating. Its aircraft will either have to move in well defined axis to the coastline or from land, attacking Pakistan movements at sea from the rear; or else, they will have to fly far out to sea, to deliver attacks from different directions, with a greater expenditure of fuel and hence a reduced payload.²⁶

Pakistan has a large reservoir of trained and experienced

26. Ibid, p. 47.

seamen. There are found on fishing trawlers, in its merchant navy, on ships flying foreign flags. It is possible to convert them into fighting seamen with training and organisation. This will take time and money but it will be cheaper than to rely for the defence effort exclusively on the build-up of the navy. Once Pakistan's seamen are trained in the use of weapons, merchant ships can be refitted to carry out warlike operations in a limited way. With the defensive weapons Pakistani merchant ships will have the capacity to counter the Indian submarine warfare. Once Pakistan opts for waging a prolonged war, the ability to damage Indian shipping assumes crucial importance. India has an extensive overseas trade which forms a very important sector of its economy. It also depends heavily upon the import of good grains and is incapable of ever reaching self-sufficiency. Interference with its foreign trade is bound to damage seriously its war effort.

To protect the coast line drawn from Kutch to the Horn of Africa against attack from sea by ships, the domination of the sea space is essential for this purpose the infliction of maximum damage on the enemy navy in its home waters and during attempts to intrude into the sea space to damage on the enemy overseas trade on a global scale and raids on enemy installations on shore, disruption of the enemy's overseas traffic in distant waters by auxiliary cruisers and armed merchantmen. There should be following operational commands - as coastal defence including air defence, anti-submarine warfare, aerial warfare anti-reconnaissance flights, fighter protection and air strikes. Greater range missiles than artillery gun,

and heavier ships mounting missiles should be used. A move towards self-reliance in defence production will not only enhance the country's capacity to face actual aggression; it will act as a deterrent against aggressive designs. SAMs in use against air attack would be useful and it will provide air umbrella over the sea of Pakistan, while at the same time keeping their numbers low. Coastal defence will then be based on artillery and missile emplacements close to likely coastal targets.

Since Pakistan trawler fleet is very big, it can easily be deployed densely, itself a consideration important in spotting submarines, keeping them under close observation if once found, and combating them. These high speed craft will have to comb large areas. A large number of Pakistan's are employed in the Gulf. They are used as civilian servicemen in peace and at the event of war they can be used for anti-submarine operations.

The more effective the operations of Pakistan's navy, the greater the deterrent effect of the bombers of the fleet air arm and the less the likelihood that enemy's men-o'-war will move into the sea of Pakistan. Pakistan thought to phase them out and ultimately dispense with reliance on them for the purposes of seamar defence.

The strike arm of the naval air command needs bombers which can deliver ASMs on enemy ships: they will be practically invulnerable to the anti-aircraft defences mounted on enemy vessels. While Pakistan possesses such bombers the enemy ships will be

forced to stay out of the waters over which they can range. The acquisition of this weapon system will place Pakistan in an influential position in the northern sector of the Arabian sea.²⁷ Not only will its trade with the west be safeguarded, but it will affect the use of the Suez Canal by hostile forces. The economic penalty thereby imposed upon the enemy will be severe, and he will have to rely more and more upon vessels flying foreign flags. Pakistan naval bombers attacked by land based aircrafts and this will be advantage to Pakistan to use several air bases for the purpose.

The ships engaged in anti submarine operations escorts of merchantmen, bombers flying strikes against enemy targets may well need protection by fighter aircraft. But land based bombers carrying ASMs can go far to establish Pakistan's dominance over the northern sector of the Indian Ocean i.e. Arabian sea and thereby afford protection to merchant ships and their escorts.²⁸ Pakistan's sea-space has to be secured by surface vessels. They must be fast and modern, capable of holding their own against the modern frigates which India is now producing at home, and getting from abroad. Indian forays have to carry into Pakistan's air umbrella, imposing harsh requirements upon the attackers.

Once, however, Pakistan is committed to the protection of trade routes along the African coast, the need for frigates imme-

27. Ibid, P. 47

28. Ibid, P. 47

diately increases. The ratio in which Pakistan ought to match the opposing strength by rough estimate should be about a third of what the other side can field. During offensive activities of all types, the aerial dominance over the area of combat will be decided first, and after that the question of the opposing flotilla slugging it out with their missiles will ~~be~~ simply no more arise.

It follows that Pakistan does not require any missile boats to oppose those of India, missile carrying bombers will be able to perform the task, if necessary protected by high performance fighters. It does not appear feasible to commit Pakistani missile boats against targets on the Indian coast, unless tactical aerial domination can be ensured for the duration of the attack including the movement to, and again after wards away from, the target area. Whether such conditions can be achieved is doubtful. The area north of the line running from Kutch to the Horn of Africa will come under the air cover of the Pakistan Navy, and further west one proceeds in it, the thinner this umbrella will become. Indian surface vessels will be able to intrude into the western reaches of that sea-space. India's need to keep open her trade routes through the Suez canal will drive her into breaking Pakistan's effective influence in the approaches to the Bab el Mandab.²⁹

A powerful force of Indian surface vessels composed of cruisers, frigates, destroyers and the aircraft carrier penetrates towards the approaches to the Bab el Mandab. This is opposed by a

²⁹. Ibid. P. 48

flotilla of Pakistani missile boats and frigates or destroyers. The Indian air cover consists of fighters from the 'Vikrant', planes which cannot launch ASMs against the Pakistani missile boats; this job has to be left to land based bombers which, by virtue of the distance they have to fly, are handicapped in their payloads and in the time they can stay with the target.

The Pakistan air umbrella is provided by land-based fighters and by reconnaissance aircraft directing the fire of the missile boats. The distance from their bases reduces the time for which they can operate, but less than is the case with the Indian ASMs carrying bombers coming from Indian bases which are intercepted by Pakistani fighters before they reach the battle area. In such a setting Pakistani missile and their acquisition is justified.³⁰

The fleet of the Pakistan Navy should then consist of frigates and destroyers numbering approximately one-third of what India has plus a flotilla of missile carrying craft with an operational range upto and beyond the Bab el Mandab. The disruption of the opposing country's overseas trade will be the task of a separate command. The merchantships should be armed under international recognitions and retaining their peaceable character. This provision of very limited armament will enable the merchant ships to intercept such enemy vessels as they come across. Most meetings of armed Pakistani ships with enemy merchantmen will fall within

30. Ibid. p. 49

the realm of chance, and the total of pelagic warfare extended to a global scale will be of little practical effect. Arrivals and departures of merchantships are well known routine. Pakistani recruit citizens try together the informations about the movement of enemy ships by getting training in the use of communications equipment and codes for the transmission of such information in Arabian sea.

International law allows the arming of merchant ships for defensive purposes while at the same time recognising their civilian character. But if the merchant ships indulge in offensive hostile action against enemy, they will, thereby, lose their civilian character and be treated as warships. This thing does not want to test but this much will depend upon the attitude struck by individual countries, and they will certainly be guided by their respective policies in a conflict between India and Pakistan.

Impressing of merchant ships for watlike action against ships carrying the Indian flag will have some practical effect upon India in times of war. Its overseas trade will suffer and this will in turn diminish its potential to fight. This is so especially because India can not reach the often proclaimed and so often denied goal of self-sufficiency in food. In the event of a war food requirements in some areas might increase while some part of the productive labour force will be diverted to sustain the war effort. It is safe to presume that the need to import foodgrains will go up and any damage to the Indian carrying capacity will have its immediate effects. Since the import of foodgrains and other commodities also

has repercussions, large scale damage to Indian shipping will be projected over years and years into the future.

Much of the Indian overseas trade is carried by ships belonging to foreign countries. While they will normally not care much if armed Pakistani merchantmen attack and capture Indian flag carriers, they must be expected to take a very serious view if such action is taken against ships flying their flags, and care must be taken not to cause offense to neutrals.

Since any programme for a naval build up will take five years to materialise, taking an optimistic view and the need is to find an immediate redress for the imbalance at sea, the attack command needs to be organized right now. It becomes essential to impart training to Pakistan's so that they can use the weapons which their ships will be provided with.

Foreign shipping lines will be reluctant to fly it if they fear that their ships are impressed into warlike actions. As and when naval activities are expanded so as to draw into their ambit ships and seamen of the merchant fleet, foreign enterprises basing themselves on Pakistan will have to be given assurances that their ships will not be impressed for warlike purposes.³² Such assurances need not extend to the provision of defensive equipment which even a foreign owner may find reason to welcome. Raids of Indian installations in Kutch or Kathiawar may become possible and even

32. Ibid, P. 50

necessary. This will require forces specifically trained for the purpose i.e. marines. Pakistan may wish to secure the capacity to train large numbers of frogmen, and in order to do so, clubs should be set up.

The expansion of naval commitments will require the provision of additional shore facilities. For the purpose of Pakistan's navy, Karachi loses its significance once the objectives explained in the preceding pages are accepted. The protection of the approaches to the Gulf and to the Bab el Mandab, the provision of escorts for ships engaged in trade with the western sea-board of the Afro-Asian Ocean require that base facilities for them are established as far west as Pakistan's frontiers reach. Pakistan can build base facilities with its own personnel and given some limited imports, to a large extent also with its own industrial capacity. The correct action of naval bases will enhance the striking capability of the navy.

This goes for both the fleet of the navy and its air arm. The move of bases to the west will also bring fresh problems to the Indians when mounting air attacks on them : for they will have to traverse a much longer stretch of Pakistani territory than is the case with an attack upon Karachi, or else they will have to fly far out at sea, with a consequent loss of payload.

The problem of easing the dangerous tension that has developed in the Arabian sea has lately become one of the major military and political problems of our time. Because of its strategic

Position the Arabian sea has become now a focal point of limiting the arms race and preventing the out break of new conflicts. The later is quite probable because of the unprecedented concentration of American naval forces, including two attack aircraft-carrier units.

Since 1978 when the Soviet-American talks on the limitation and subsequent reduction of military activity in the area broke off, the united states took steps to intensity its militaristic preparation in this area with the ultimate aim of establishing its permanent military strategic presence on the shores of Arabian sea.³³ The number of warships of the U.S.A. and its allies from aggressive blocs now concentrated there. U.S.A. is expanding and modernising the existing military bases in the area, fulfilling plans of deploying there its ground forces or marines and creating a sea and shore based infrastructure to support naval operations there. A seminar on the problems of demilitarising the area in New Delhi in 1980 was held, where the concentration of military forces and establishment of bases was condemned but the united states ignored this and a qualitatively new situation in the area is being created by the accelerated militarisation of Pakistan.

In accordance with a recent agreement reached between Washington and Islamabad, the U.S.A. will annually supply Pakistan with 400 million dollars worth of arms and military equipment over the

33. International Affairs,
Page 40.

next five years.³⁴ Such a manner the re-establishing U.A. air and naval bases on the territory of Pakistan is a subject of worry. Late Mrs. Gandhi stated that the U.S.A. intends to Make Pakistan the Central link of the American strategy of defending the Persian Gulf.

China is making a determined effort to reun Pakistan, too and trying a possible construction of a Chinese military base near Karachi.³⁵ China is further increasing its southern fleet which is intended first of all for operation in area and whole of the Indian Ocean. It is believed that the P.R.Cs military presence in the Indian ocean area will inevitably lead to the further destabilisation of the already tense situation there. America and China both are determined for expanding, existing and creating new naval bases in that area. The policy of further stepping up the arms race in the Arabian sea persuaded by Washington and its allies is a direct challenge to all the littoral countries. This course is totally at odds with their desire for a lasting peace in the region.

34. Ibid, P.40.

35. Ibid, P. 41

Strait of Hormuz

The Strategic Hormuz strait and the Shatt-al-Arab have acquired enhanced strategic importance in the wake of the Iran-Iraq war. All the Gulf oil exports, over a quarter of the world's total supplies including 40% to the non-communist world, pass through the 30 miles wide and upto 235 feet deep Hormuz strait. More than 5,000 tankers and 800 millions tonnes of oil annually move through this vital waterway. Moreover, 90% of Indian oil imports contracted for 1980 were to come from the Gulf oil refineries at the head of the Gulf and Shatt-al-Arabs estuary. Sixty foreign vessels were trapped in the Shatt-al-Arab water way. These included 22 Indian mechanised vessels with a crew of 400 standard at Basra and Fao.⁴⁷

Iranian navy claimed that it was in an undisputed control of the Hormuz strait, northern shores of the Gulf and their continental shelf. The waterway remained open for international traffic. Iran made it known that it had no intention to enforce blockade of waterway. Traffic in the strait was reduced because some shipping companies refused to risk their vessels and crew during the hostilities.

The U.S. stationed the largest ever international naval force of 50 to 60 war ships in the approaches to the Gulf and close to the Hormuz strait in October 1980, the first-ever show of strength by the western navies led by the U.S.A. in the region. The muscle-

47. Shreedhar & J.P. Anand : Intervention in the Indian Ocean (ABC Publishing House, New Delhi), P.85.

flexing force included 35 U.S. warships led by two aircraft carriers, 5 French, 10 British, and 4 or 5 Australian warships. Interestingly⁴⁸ the U.S. sponsored multipower armada was deployed during the campaign preceding the U.S. presidential election in November.

A joint Anglo-American maritime exercise by 25 warships, 170 aircraft and 18,000 sailors, airmen and marines was held close to the region commencing 20 October 1980 as a show of force further exacerbating the explosive situation.⁴⁹ Gulf Emirates feared that the sharp increase in U.S. military presence would prompt the Soviets to counter with matching military moves. The show of force was aimed to ensure that the strategic water way was kept open for international shipping, an unfettered access to oil and support for pro-west Gulf rulers. India had serious misgivings about the provocative move aimed at ensuring the continuous flow of oil by force, if necessary, as it carried with it the risk of further escalation.

The geopolitical significance of international waterways has gained added importance since all the major maritime nations taking part in the third U.N. conference on the law of the sea have asserted the right of overflight and unimpeded passage through the international straits. The principles of 'innocent passage' and transit passage through territorial waters, international straits, archipelagic waters and the 200 mile economic zones have been agreed to the satisfaction of major maritime powers. The revised

48. Ibid, P. 86.

49. Ibid, P. 86.

Informal Composite Negotiation Text (ICNT) put up in 1980 provides rights of navigation and overflights free of economic and political costs, 'transit passage' through international straits, especially less than 24 miles in width, and it applies to all ships whether on surface or submerged and includes the movement of warships and aircraft in military formation. All these concepts are in the "consensus basket" of the draft text of the sea law treaty.

The strait of Hormuz is of particular importance to the maritime countries, because it provides the outlet for tankers exporting oil from the Persian Gulf. Since Nov. 1971, when Iran took advantage of the British withdrawal to seize control of three islands in the strait, Iran has effectively controlled this outlet. There is no evidence that Iran would wish to interfere with traffic through the strait except to exert pressure on Iraq, with which Iran has a number of boundary disputes associated with the Shatt-al-Arab, the land boundary through Kurdish areas, and the division of the continental shelf at head of the Persian Gulf. It is noticeable that maritime countries, and especially the United States, have been at pains to establish cordial relations with Iran.⁵⁰

It therefore appears that in the contemporary situation this question of passage through international straits occupied by territorial waters is potential rather than actual. However the maritime

50. J.R.V Prescott : The political Geography of the Ocean (David & Charles Newton abett, London) P. 110.

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states, aware that claims to territorial water in excess of 12 nautical miles will extend this potential difficulty to a large number of international straits, would prefer such problems to be removed.

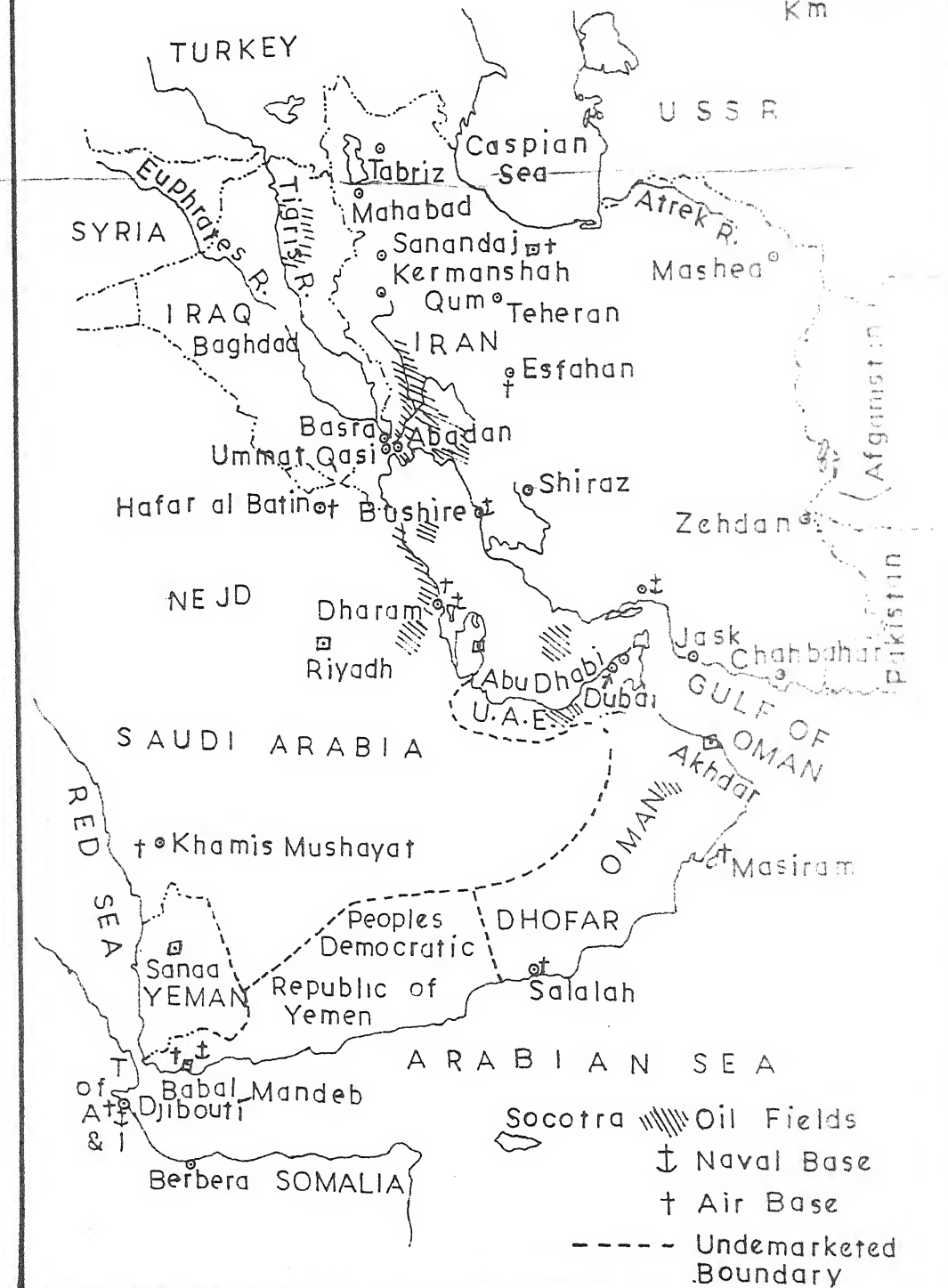
On average, two tankers an hour pass through the strait of Hormuz⁵¹ and it became clear since the war between Iran and Iraq that because of serious threat to the oil route through the Strait of Hormuz, western countries were much more interested in the prompt military protection of their energy supplies than in other considerations, and indeed that the Arab oil producers were themselves dependent on this passage remaining open, since it is their economic life-line. Iraq lacks Iran's strategic significance due to the latter's position as trade the northern shores of the straits of Hormuz through which passes the bulk of the oil bound for sale on the international market. An agreement was made in 1975 between Iran and Oman for a joint naval supervision of strait of Hormuz.⁵² The Gulf oil is the most emphasised resource essential to the west and for this purpose the western countries have established their naval bases in the Arabian sea and on the shore of Persian Gulf. The threat of possible closure of the straits of Hormuz has received intense international attention, especially since the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war in September 1980. Large forces have been positioned in the vicinity to keep the straits 'open' and investments in arms supplies and security arrangements have been made in

51. Ibid, p. 109.

52. Ibid, p. 110.

THE PERSIAN GULF

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the region leading to expenditures of billions of dollars. An alternative to the vulnerability of the straits of Hormuz "Chock-point" could have been the construction of an oil pipeline by passing the Chock-point and leading directly into the Arabian sea.⁵³ The countries concerned are already part of a Gulf cooperation council. Extending a pipeline from Kuwait to Masirah/Oman (a distance of around 1000 miles) may well be in the order of \$ 200 million : a figure representing possibly one week's cost of maintaining the naval armada near the straits of Hormuz.

The Persian Gulf

Persian Gulf is also one of the Gulf of the Arabian sea. It separates the Arabian peninsula from the coast of Iran. The shallow strait of Hormuz connects it with the Gulf of Oman. The Gulf contains a number of Islands which are the main cause of conflict between the states of this region.

The Gulf covers an area of about 97,000 square miles. The length of the Gulf from the coast of Oman to the northern head is 500 miles and from the Gulf of Oman to the south-east is another 200 miles. The former is 180 miles wide but the width narrows down to 28 miles at the strait of Hormuz. The waters of the Gulf are shallow and the maximum depth does not exceed 228 feet.⁵⁴

53. Ibid, P. 111

54. K. Asopa : Oil Arms and Islam in the Gulf - (Printwell Publishers Jaipur), P. 4

Its north-western coast forms the part of Iran which is mountainous and almost without any streams. But it has few inlets which have been developed in good ports by Iran. The south-western coast of the Gulf forms the part of the Arab lands. The shallowness of the Gulf makes the southern coast unsuitable for harbours except for a Persian Gulf.

In the whole of the Indian Ocean no sea zone is more closely concerned with Indian than the Persian Gulf. India's links with it, dating from the Indus valley-Mesopotamian civilisation, are most ancient. Every time a dominant power arose in the Middle East, the Gulf became its base, from where control of the Arabian sea sectors was exercised. The repercussions were always felt in India.⁵⁵ The India-based British strategy could never leave the Gulf alone and as the 1980s opened, the Persian Gulf became a glaring focus of confrontation between the super powers.

Eight states of the Middle East have coastlines on the Gulf. The only common thing along them is religion and all but Iran speak a common language; otherwise they differ in size, economic resources, political ideas and foreign orientations. Here there are kings and king breakers, rightists and leftists, the richest and poorest in the world and the liberal and the fanatic. Unrest, tension and conflict have had a field day here, marked by military coups, civil wars, assassinations, guerrilla operations and ethnic frictions.

55. M.K. Chopra, India and the Indian Ocean,
P. 114.

The revolution in Iran and the War between Iran and Iraq are the high watermarks of the gross abnormalities around the Gulf.

Till the war between Iraq and Iran, these two countries alongwith Saudi Arabia were the three topmost oil-producing countries in the OPEC - and also the biggest buyers of arms in the Middle East. They were medium powers, closely connected with the power structure in the Gulf. That structure was largely conditioned by their alliances with super powers : Iran was a member of CENTO, Saudi Arabia links with the United States and Iraq had friendship treaty with the Soviet Union. Efforts on their part to fortify and upgrade their military positions led to massive arms build-up, for which there was no ostensible reason other than mutual suspicion or some vague idea of ascendancy. This notion was impregnated with super power interests, the united states largely concentrating on oil and the U.S.S.R. on the security of one of its border lands. The upshot was that the Persian Gulf became the most heavily armed part of the Middle East and also the most sensitive, more than the Red sea because here the super powers faced each other directly.⁵⁶ There are three factors concerned with the balance of the region - super power interests, relations between the three major local powers, and oil. These were variable according to time and circumstances. Wars and revolutions destroyed the alliance picture, but that only intensified India's interest.

56. Ibid, P. 115.

India's interest in the Gulf would be threefold. The potential of sophisticated, long-range weapons, the emergence of base facilities for their use, and the unpredictable ambitionness of powers around the Gulf had all extra-regional nuances that affected India, particularly in its relations with Pakistan, secondly, the massive confrontation of Super powers in the area had brought conflict right at India's doorsteps. Thirdly, the whole development threatened India's principal source of oil import as well as the security of its own offshore oil producing sector.⁵⁷

In any strategic development, oil would be an important factor. India had struck oil offshore west of Bombay and in 1982 has ambitious plans to search for more in the vicinity. This along with a great variety of installations would have to be protected. Much more than the locally produced crude was the quantity of oil coming from Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia; thus, the north-east of the Arabian sea assumed a crucial importance because it contained the transportation lines.

For the first time, therefore, India would be forced to restructure its strategy in terms of the Arabian sea. The distances involved were not long and India had the resources to cope with contingencies arising in the area. New Delhi would seek to keep on friendly terms with the disparate Gulf states, but it could not take chances. India's maritime power would thus be influenced by

57. Ibid, P. 145.

what was happening in the Gulf, which meant more and better ships for high seas operations, long-range naval-air arm, and more fortified bases on the west coast.

On the whole, close linkage between the India subcontinent and the Middle East, in particular the Persian Gulf, would be an important feature of the 1980s. This could be based upon peaceful intercourse, of which history has provided an example. But history is also reminiscent of something quite the reverse, for the waters off the Persian Gulf and off Gujarat have been the scene of armed clashes in the past. Military power is being escalated in both the regions of the Persian Gulf and the Indian sub-continent, and this is not merely in terms of local compulsions; a time is likely to come when it would be measured on the regional scale.

The most important is the Bay of Kuwait which in the past served as the Chief port of the region. Another Bay is at Dubai. In most of the oil ports of the Gulf, ships anchor at a distance and oil is shipped by pipes. At the northern extremity of the Gulf is the silt plain of Iraq and Iran built up by the Shatt-al-Arab, the Common estuary of the Euphrates and Tigris joined by Karakah and Karun rivers of Iran. This area being cultivable and fertile is most thickly populated. Most of the shores of the Gulf are arid and uncultivable.

The important of the Gulf also lies in its being the shortest sea route connecting Europe with the lands of Asia. The Gulf served as a major route for maritime trade through which goods

possessions in India.

In consolidating their hold over the Gulf region. British entered a number of treaties with the local Amirs and Sheikhs which gave them enormous powers. The naval paramountcy of the British in the Gulf came into conflict with the Russian desire to expand in this direction and counter the German ambition also towards this region when they contract from the Ottoman Empire to construct the Constantinople-Bagdad Railway line (1899) to be extended later upto Kuwait.⁵⁹

The increasing German interest and initiative in the Gulf region brought Russia and Britain closer to each other which resulted in the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907. According to this convention, Britain undertook to accommodate Russian interests in the Gulf region and adjoining areas. Britain also concluded an agreement with Kuwait in 1891 which debarred the latter from entering into any negotiations with the external powers without the Consent of the British. By the end of the 19th century, Britain consolidated its position in the Gulf through treaties with Oman, Muscat, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and the Sheikhdoms.

Britains oil interests also need to be mentioned. Britain had acquired oil concessions in Iran as early as 1901 and established the Anglo-Iranian oil company in 1909. Britain had to share these oil concessions with the united states by accepting it as a

59. Ibid, P. 117.

partner in this oil deal. The oil contest led to the partition of the Gulf region between large companies of the West.

After 1st W.W. Britain emerged more stronger than ever before as now it was the sole claimant of power in the Gulf region except Iran. Iran under Shah Reza Khan posed problems for Britain. During II W.W. the Gulf owing to its geo-political and strategic importance and vast oil reserves became vulnerable to Nazi and Fascist expansionist designs. The mounting pressure from the Arab nationalist posed serious threat to British power and influence in West Asia. Iran along with Afghanistan, Iraq and Turkey had proclaimed the policy of strict neutrality through the Saadabad Pact in 1937.⁶⁰ It weakened the British Defence system, so Britain felt once again the need of befriending Russians and formed an agreement of January 1942 forced Iran to abandon the policy of neutrality. Simultaneously, British armed intervention in Iraq suppressed the anti-British government of Al-Qaylani and Britain entered the process of winding up its power in most of the Arab territories.

The termination of its empire in India and the growth of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements in the newly emergent countries made it difficult for Britain and France to hold on their rule in the West Asian regimes as well. Britain had to relinquish its power in all the Arab States except Sheikhdoms.

60. Braun, *Interests and Instruments of the Super Powers* (Oxford University Press Bombay), P. 30.

In the Post War period, the U.S.S.R. refused to vacate the Iranian province of Azerbaijan and supported to the secessionist Tudeh Party and demanded for a joint control over the Black sea. The result was that all the countries situated at its southern periphery threatened to their independence. The creation of Israel in the heart of the Arab lands and the west's drive brought them more closer through military pacts and alliances further aggravated the danger to the independence of the West Asian states. The Arabs mounted pressure on the west for the liberation of their territories and termination of the unequal treaties which had placed the natural resources of the area under the control of the colonial powers. Thus the super powers conflict began to start in this region. American involvement in Lebanon and Israel and arms supplies to Iran, Jordan and Israel grew rapidly. Due to this the Soviet Union also increased its involvement with the radical states of this region and started giving military aid to Syria, Egypt and Iraq. In this way the Soviet influence posed a threat to traditional Arab monarchies. President Nixon offered his Qian Doctrine (1969),⁶¹ to the Arab nationalists which was simply an extension of Indo-China policy to west Asia which aimed at building military installations, naval bases and air fields in the region under the pretext of preparing the local states to defend themselves and their resources. But in the aftermaths of the Iranian revolution, the American strategy was updated through Carter

61. Ibid, P. 31.

Doctrine of 1980 formulated the salvage the western interests in the Gulf region. The Indian sub-continent was a very low political priority by Washington. After the end of Vietnam war, the Persian Gulf sub-region became the centre of American interests in the Arabian sea. Outside pressure on the Gulf region during the 1980s will however be much more intense than was that on ASEAN countries and internal tensions will be at least as great due to energy crisis of 1973 and Iran-Iraq war of 1973 and OPEC policy of oil price increases, production cuts and a boycott which was called an oil weapon used as the political instrument together with economic measures, for the specific purpose of exerting on the west pressure that would have a decisive effect on the Arab-Israel conflict.

United States activities were condemned by all the countries of Gulf region except Oman and Soviet Union gained a chance to continue her important political activities against United States which gave it potential access to the Gulf. Its support for these Arab aims made it valuable as a possible ally. The Islamic Summit at Taif (Saudi Arabia) in January 1981 showed clearly where the emphasis lay with regard to the super powers, for in spite of being handicapped by Afghanistan, the Soviet Union came off better than the United States.

Brezhnev's proposal of Dec. 1980 to all concerned powers

to safeguard the Gulf region met with no response in the region because of the occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet Union and it was treated as a countermove, to the Carter Doctrine of January 1980.⁶² On account of this the Gulf region had developed into a dangerous grey area between the antagonistic power blocs and a crisis management among the major powers.

The Gulf States are realistic in that they primarily fear those threats to their security which are the most obvious : domestic unrest, sabotage, espionage, intra-regional conflicts and so on. To counter act these threats they are attempting to develop closer cooperation in those areas which affect their security. To guard against this continuous opponent possible activity of super powers in this region, they are in a way to adopt a formula of Peace Zone concept. The western powers were much more interested in the prompt military protection of their supplies than in other considerations since it is their economic life line too, if any internal or external attack was made there.

The Gulf region is likely to remain highly unstable because of internal political and social factors. The Gulf is significant to the western allies for their arms sale and to make themselves economically strong and weak to them for their use against others. It is astonishing that the conservative Gulf regimes, for their narrow interests of maintaining the traditional political structures

62. Ibid. P. 33.

at home have opted for massive militarization instead of utilizing their financial resources in the internal development.

The west's Gulf policy should therefore be shaped predominantly by a sense of shared responsibility for a region which can no longer be western domain, but which substantially consolidates the foundations of its economics and of its security. The linkage between oil, arms and Islam developed at the detriment of the people of this region has exposed the Gulf to disintegrating forces both from within and outside.

Gulf of Aden

Gulf of Aden is situated between the southern coast (North and South Yemens) of Arabland and Africa. It is 900 kms. long and 320 kms wide.³⁶ The strait of Bab-al-Mandeb, which is at its western end, connects it with the Red sea. It is twice as long as the Gulf of Oman. Bab-al-Mandeb which in Arabic means 'gate of tears and sorrows', is 27 kms wide.³⁷ Its Arabic name is very appropriate in view of its complete hold over ships from or en route to Suez canal and its consequent capability of bringing the ship captains and crews to tears and sorrows. The rocky island of Perim is situated in this strait.

Aden is a fuelling station for both the naval and merchant ships and is therefore, of vital strategic importance. Further the Gulf of Aden is in the north of the Arabian sea. In the north-west, the Arabian sea juts into the Persian Gulf. The entry of this Gulf from the east side is controlled by the island of Socotra. For ages it had been the home waters of the Arab corsairs, who had their base in Aden, a covered and almost hidden post on the coast of the tip of Arabia.³⁸

The last quarter of the 19th century was a period of increasing anxiety in Britain about problems of Imperial defence. It was

36. B. Singh, Indian Ocean and Regional Security (A.C. Publishers, 9C Agit Nagar Patiyala, P. 20.

37. Ibid, p. 20.

38. V.K. Bhasin, Super Power Rivalry in the Indian Ocean, P. 10.

a period of industrial revolution and serious challenges. Britain had to look to her defence and to her outposts along the sea routes of the globe. The colonial rivalry was begun and there could be no doubt of Aden's importance in the new state of Affairs. After the opening of the Suez canal in 1869 a tight cluster of sea routes bent southward through the Red sea and fanned out east, south-east and south-west ward from the Bab-el-Mandeb to British possessions in India and Africa. Aden now ranked among the most important possessions of the British crown.³⁹

Aden is about half way between Suez and Bombay. It is a strategic station on one of the chief high roads of the world and has a good harbour which was strongly fortified by Great Britain. Aden occupies a commanding position on the southwest point of Arabia at the head of the Persian Gulf & looks at the horn of Africa. Britain paid much attention to the development of the Aden harbour since it linked the mediterranean and the Arabian sea and guarded the entrance to the Red Sea from the east as Gibraltar did from the west. She consider it essential to maintain a large naval force in Aden to safeguard her interests in the region.

Aden's strategic importance was certainly much greater than when it had been a half forgotten appendage of the Bombay presidency during the days before the Suez canal project was conceived. Aden as the guardian of the main lifeline of the Empire seemed very

39. R.J. Gavin, Aden under British Rule 1839-1967 (C. Hurst and Company, London, U.K.), P. 174.

much less obvious. Some defence experts were saying that the Suez canal route could not be counted on in wartime because it could too easily be blocked by sunken ships.⁴⁰ Such a view was further reinforced by the rapid growth of French naval strength in the Mediterranean in the late 1880s and a development of Russian Black sea naval power. By the 1890s it was generally assumed that war time communication with India would be maintained via the cape. The Indian Govt. continued to cite the tonnage of British merchant shipping using Aden for purposes of fund-raising in London for Aden defences, but at last it was found that Aden was less capable for protection of commerce than of sealing off the Red sea, should the canal fall into enemy hands. In this way in 1903 it was assessed as being of very doubtful importance.⁴¹

Between 1880s and 1904 Britain's naval position in the Mediterranean was uncertain and Aden's strategic role had not greatly changed from the days when its possession would make very strong in those parts of influence. Therefore after 1863, an unarmed steamer was placed there to maintain contact with the adjacent coasts.

Nevertheless Aden's seaward defences were substantially improved in the 40 years prior to W.W.I. The invention and improvement in military technology impressed and influenced the fortresses

40. Ibid. p. 174.

41. Ibid. p. 176.

defence, so the Aden with others acquired additional value and got its new defences.⁴²

Aden had always been a well-defended place. The nature of Aden had been changed in broader sense. It meant that military security was given absolute priority over all other considerations. When Aden had first been occupied it had been regarded as a centre of commercial influence as well as a military base. Aden was commercially prosperous. The key to Aden's new prosperity was the coal bunkering business and the opening of the Suez canal in 1869. Aden's fortunes were also bound to those of the steamships which it served and steam was still not in a position to displace sail in 1869. Sailing ships still provided cheaper carriage for goods in bulk. By 1883 the coal bunkering business at Aden seemed poised for an even greater boom due to the competition from the island of Perim. After 1890 the cutthroat competition ceased and Aden regained its earlier important position. Aden had the appearance of one of the finest natural harbours in the world.⁴³ There the choppy water was supplied from the Shaykh Ullman wells. Aden was not much deep harbour, so there were so many problems in case of loading and bunkering of coal bags, and they could not be thrust through the port with that celerity which was so desirable. The Aden harbour had dredged in 1890, after an act setting up the Aden port trust was passed in Bombay. Aden was still under the Presi-

42. Ibid, P. 176.

43. Ibid, P. 182.

dency of Bombay but no Governor of Bombay was willing to spend capital sums on anything except Bombay garrison army. Aden served the purposes of British rather than Indian foreign policy and as for the port, the shipping which used it was far more British than Indian. There were proposals during 1861, to 1900 that Aden should be transferred entirely to the Home Government. But the Indian Government was not willing to relinquish all control while the British Treasury had no desire to pay the expenses of the settlement. This was the difficulty in the way of the improvements to Aden harbour.

In 1891 Indian Government was willing to lend money to the Aden Port Trust once it saw that by so doing it would not saddle itself with unlimited responsibility. By 1895 Aden began to breathe again by completing the dredging scheme. The dredging and re-dredging of the harbour kept Aden competitive against rivals half way across the globe for the custom of the increasingly long ranged steamers that could now pick and choose their refuelling depots.

The massive flow of shipping through the port helped Aden gather up the greater part of the commerce in its immediate vicinity. Goods were turned over fast by Aden merchants and telegraphic communication enabled them to buy and sell at the most profitable price. Aden was now a main station on the telegraph route between Europe and the East through Arabian sea. The advantages in charge payment and facilities were given to those steamers who linked Aden with other ports along the coast. The businessmen at Aden steadily secured a domination over the commerce of the whole area

including with Arabian sea area. Aden was a most strategical and a multiracial market place. Aden was as overcrowded as before and therefore the unemployment was also taking place there. Stern measures were taken about outsiders from time to time by Government to repel these invaders of its fortress from point of view of security.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the idea that the state should intervene to promote social welfare was gaining ground in Britain and India, and this had its effect at Aden. The population of Aden was quite amenable to the prevailing methods of administrative control and every government attempt to alter the pattern of economic and social life in the port. In 1866, a new attempt was made through schooling the people of Aden in English and Arab based institutions.

During this period the economic and social links between Aden & the hinterland became of less importance than the purely political connection. Trade and politics became less closely integrated and in Aden the British authorities became concerned less with keeping the landward trade routes open than with obtaining an internationally recognised frontier which would more directly secure the hinterland of the fortress and the entrepot.

The British foreign secretary said in March 1903 that we

have never desired to interfere with the internal and domestic affairs of the tribes in Aden and should not be interfered with by any other power. In this way we can say that British adopted non-intervention policy in Aden but they were heavily involved in tribal politics and very soon discussion developed in Aden about methods of political control.

Aden was a bustling port with strong defences and a powerful modern minded commercial community and & improved facilities of every kind. Aden itself fed on the trade and ideas of a developing world where massive investment in railways, mines and commercial agriculture was taking place and progress and development were propagated by imperial agents since. Hence they attempted to try to attract the asians and Africans after 19th Century.

Now Aden became successful to expand its amenities and prosperity into the neighbouring country and in this time a number of new projects were initiated as opening of dispensaries, colleges, recruitment of tribesmen into force and financial assistance to agricultural development etc. But these were being put in the bag till further decision on account of the threat of Turkish attack.

In 1906, when the liberal Party Government came in power, the new secretary for India was Lord Morley and Viceroy was Lord Minto. They were against the previous development plans and wanted to give a direction to India of Self-government gradually and this policy was affected to Aden also. The paramountcy of power politics in industrial Europe with its immense and growing armaments gradually prevailed, the importance of local and independent pro-

tection of imperial posts like Aden correspondingly declined.

On 4 May 1906, a long despatch was sent to government of India calling for a complete change in policy. It was also directed to withdraw all the troops from the hinterland and no military operations were to be conducted beyond a ten-mile radius from Aden without the permission of the secretary of state.⁴⁵ Frontier questions were to be handled through diplomatic channels in Europe and not by action on the spot. India reacted sharply to his attack on so many of their pet schemes and on the suggestion of Aden for dealing directly with the minor shaykhs in the Aden hinterland and rejected it. Indian government said that if the home government wanted to run Aden in their own way they should take over full financial and political responsibility for the settlement. This affected the secretary of state who delayed the withdrawal of the troops from Aden for the duration of a serious diplomatic crisis on the Egyptian frontier at Akaba but the home government was seemed uncompromising in tone on this. The occupation of Aden derives its main importance from its relation to the general foreign policy of the Empire and it was not regarded as another province of British India.⁴⁶

British activity in the hinterland altered and became more subdued but it could not return completely to the status quo ante demarcation. Moreover, the Aden government had a clearer idea of

45. Ibid, p. 233.

46. Ibid, p. 236.

how Arab Society worked and it could now pursue a more coherent and purposeful course of action within the limits laid down by London. New national consciousness has started taking place in Arab world and British government was anxious to this radical change. So she adopted a policy of close co-operation with popular personalities of there and through them the facilities were started sanctioning those who had favourable attitudes to Government. In spite of all this the political unrest had been started there and the social reform was had to be cracked and power fighting between and among the groups or tribes had to be seen also there.

Red Sea-Subway

This region is a cross road between Asia, Africa and Europe; through it passes the shortest route between Europe and the East. Economically the Red sea itself has been found on exploration to have considerable mineral wealth. It is located in close proximity to the world's richest oil source, the Persian Gulf and its value as a means of transportation of Middle East oil to Europe is considerable. Politically it is split into ten independent states. Here, there has been a civil war between the two Yemens, Guerilla War in Ethiopia and the great wars between Israel and Arabs. Religious variations, differentials of size and economic resources, dissimilar political norms, and clashing ideologies are emerging. Here mutual confrontation, bickering, suspicious and backdoor politics occur on a scale unparalleled in the world.

India and the Red Sea zone have had connected with each other for over 3000 years. Curiosity, desire for trade and pursuit of maritime power were the chief incentives. More recently, the two outstanding developments have been the opening of the Suez Canal and the breakup of the sub-region into several political units.

The powerful influence of the 151 km long waterway upon India dates from the days of the British for whom it cut the distance from India to Europe by seven thousand miles. The Suez became an inseparable link that bound India to Britain. After the British the main value of the canal has been as an ocean high-

way that provides India the shortest route to Europe. However, the changing fortunes of the region have rendered it unreliable. It was little used during W.W.II, was closed in 1956 with the outbreak of hostilities between Egypt and Anglo-French combine, reopened, then closed again in 1967 till 1975, when over 10,000 bombs and mines were spotted and cleared and it came into use again.⁶³ India like the rest of the world, has now learnt to live with a situation in which the canal is as good as non-existent. The route via south Africa is long and expensive but not prohibitive. Besides if Indian goods can not go to Europe via the Canal, neither can the goods from Europe arrive by the same route. Thus, India's trade with the middle East and upper African encounters less competition.

Other forces are at work, barring Israel and Ethiopia the region is Muslim. The movement of Islam west of the Middle East into Africa has been an old phenomenon. The movement is faster and goes deeper. Whatever the outcome of the external thrusts against Israel and internal struggle in Ethiopia. These two states have no place in the Islamic or at least Arabian scheme of things. A religiously motivated struggle must be reckoned as a long-term affair.

But the Red sea is more than a conglomeration of sub-regional states. The two super powers have interests. The NATO and

63. M.K. Chopra, India & The Indian Ocean, P. 116

Warsaw pact powers have interests. This would become an arena of world power confrontation in inevitable. It is likely to take two forms, one marked by actual presence of the powers and the other by proxy. Eastern Mediterranean to the north and Arabian sea to the south witness continuous jostling for commanding positions on the part of super powers, in the course of which alignments take place between them and the local powers, making confusion worse confounded.⁶⁴

There is no single power in the sub-region that can tower over the rest. Egypt's attempts in this field is now an old tale. The imperatives of power balance operate both in the sphere of local powers and that of the super powers. In neither case the equilibrium has been established. The Arab-Israeli conflict is far from settled, but even if it were the inter-Arab feuds could continue to stoke fires in this part of the world. And as for the super powers, their future in the area fluctuates under the stresses of global strategy, the ebb and flow of influence in the region, and domestic policies.

One envisages the Red Sea as an amazingly complex zone, to remain a witches, cauldron in the foreseeable future. India can do little about it, but that really does not matter. Apart from providing a good communication line, which again can be dispensed

64. Ibid, P. 117.

with, the Red sea is of no direct interest to India, although the shock waves of events happening here do reach the Indian shores. Because of the distance and the interplay of extra-ordinarily varied and powerful forces, India is not capable of exercising maritime influence in the subregion. And so far as the regional states are concerned, none of them is powerful enough to be effective in the Arabian sea and is no threat to India located so far away.

The development of a crisis area at the entrance to the Red sea did not come as a surprise. In past years, there have not only been occasional open conflicts and incidents of fighting, which to be sure were for the most part restricted to regional importance. This region has provided a veritably classical stage for the development of regional conflicts in general in terms of the multiplicity of potential factors which could lead to conflicts since these formerly colonial regions became independent.

As long as this area was only considered to be an appendix to other, more important, stages of international political and economic importance, it was possible to ignore the storm warnings over the entrance to the Red Sea and assume that they did not constitute any threat. However, this situation has changed since 1973 by various factors which are extremely different in terms of origin, political importance and ramifications :

- (a) The reopening of the Suez Canal in June of 1975 transformed the Red Sea from an appendix to the Arabian sea

into a major artery in terms of economic and strategic importance between the Arabian sea and the Mediterranean.⁶⁵ Its economic importance with respect to the Transport of oil and freight, to particular aspects of its military importance, must also be taken into account - Istly, a link has been provided between the Mediterranean and the Arabian sea which permit the movement of naval vessels between both bodies of water and secondly, the Red sea has also become more important to both parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The naval units from the Mediterranean to the Red sea increases the threat to the Israeli oil route from Iran to Eilat.

(b) Since 1973, Arab pretensions of making an Arab sea out of the Red Sea have led to an active security policy on the part of the Arab countries lying on the shores of Red sea. This should be seen against the background of the Arab world's attempts to appear as a guarantor of political order in all areas of immediate interest to these countries in the wake of the increase in power resulting from the energy crisis and the attempts to exclude the superpowers.

(c) The growth and the political importance of the Red sea is in the end a reflection of the importance in terms of international politics which the Arabian sea has attained in the context of the world wide balance of power between East and West.

65. Strategic Digest, Feb. 1978, P. 28-29.

Rann of Kutch

From January 1965 manouvres by Pakistan army were noticed in the district of Kutch. Soon after, the Indian Foreign Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh, informed the Parliament that Pakistan had built a new track to facilitate movement of their vehicles south of Kanjarkot fort in the Kutch which according to him "was well within Indian territory."¹ He also disclosed that Pakistan border forces were putting obstructions of India patrols proceeding North of this track. Pakistan on the other hand stated that in February 1965 Indians had started building up forces in this area and in spite of Pakistani efforts to dissuade India from having recourse to fighting, it appears that Indian leaders were, 'itching to plunge their country into war, no matter what the consequences were.'² However it appeared that both India and Pakistan were not prepared to surrender their stands on Kutch Border dispute and would not hesitate to resort to force if necessary. The Kutch affair was a warning of the intentions and events likely to follow.

The area of Rann of Kutch is nearly 320 miles long and approximately 50 miles wide with a total area of nearly 8000 sq. miles). This is nearly one-half of the Kutch (17600 sq. miles). The Rann is submerged by the waters of the Arabian sea from May

1. The Statesman, March 4th, 1965.

2. Brig. Guhar Ahmed (Retd.) : Pakistan Meets Indian Challenge
Rawalpindi, 1967, P. 63.

to October and for remaining six months it becomes a salty and sandy desert. The bed of the Rann is dry and hard and there has been no sign of vegetable life. The area is barren and uninhabitable even during the six dry months because during this period it transforms into a salty and sandy desert. The region is better accessible from Sind than from Indian side. Politically the Rann of Kutch is a border area of Indian with Pakistan, and border lands however difficult its terrain & may be are always of strategic and political significance. They mark the terminus of territorial jurisdiction of two or more sovereign states. From this view they have international status.³ The strategic importance of the area according to Pakistani view was that as the Rann was close to Karachi it was vital for Pakistan to hold this area and any Indian control in this region would permit an advance deeper into Sind and cut-off West Pakistan in two as the only rail and road communication between Lahore and Karachi were along the eastern bank of India.⁴ This view clearly indicated Pakistani apprehensions and hence it was logical for Pakistan to strengthen her line of communications in the area and also occupy strategic points. It was in this background that Brig. Gulzar Ahmad in his book "Pakistan Meets Indian Challenge" observed that "it is regrettable that Pakistan has so

3. G.J. Chacko : The Rann of Kutch and International Law, India Journal of International Law, 1965, Vol. V, P. 147.

4. Brig. Gulzar Ahmad : Pakistan Meets Indian Challenge, P. 46.

far only claimed north half of the Rann....." He further justified his statement by saying "the reason is that Pakistan has always contended that Rann is an inland area and as such should be divided equally between the bordering states. He writes that in actual practice the Sind Government held administrative control of the whole of Rann throughout the British period."⁵ The Indian view on the other hand was that before independence, the Rann formed part of the territory of the princely state of the Kutch. (This is substantiated by the preparation survey of Indian maps). Following the partition and separation of Sind as the part of the newly created Pakistan, the need arose for the demarcation of the international boundary between Kutch and Sind. Accordingly the ruler of Kutch sought from Karachi such a demarcation on the recognized and defacto boundary between Sind and the Rann. Pakistan took the stand that the entire northern half of the Rann was a territory in dispute. Between 1947 and 1965 the Government of India and Pakistan exchanged various notes on the question without any result. Pakistani contention was that as the border between India and Pakistan ran through the middle of the Rann, the dispute involved some 3500 sq. miles of the territory. The dispute was first discussed at diplomatic level in January 1960, when it was decided that both sides would collect further data and discuss the question. No further effort, however was made to solve the dispute, until January 1965.⁶

5. Ibid, P. 65.

6. S.M. Burke, Pakistan's Foreign Policy, P. 324.

Border incidents began to take place with increasing frequency from January 1965. On 25 January, 1965 an Indian police patrol noticed a recently laid out 20 mile track by Pakistanis north of the Kanjarkot for which according to the Indian claims was over a mile inside the Indian Border. Between January and April strong protests and statements both from Indian and Pakistani leaders were made to confirm that both sides were preparing for a showdown. To make matters worst Pakistan in March 1965 gave away over 2000 sq. miles of Indian territory in the state of Jammu & Kashmir to China which further annoyed India as she treated this as an act of aggression against her territories.⁷ Pakistan Foreign Minister Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto alleged and made strong protests against India also for organising provocations on the East Pakistan border.⁸ However, till 9th April, the Kutch episode remained confined to probing patrols and an exchange of angry notes. On 10th April Pakistani forces launched a major attack in brigade strength of Indian posts in the Rann area. Simultaneously the Pakistan Foreign Minister also stated that "he was not happy over the border conflicts and wanted the two sides to negotiate for a settlement."⁹ The Indian Prime Minister also favoured negotiations but warned Pakistan that, "India would not permit aggression on her frontiers and may have to adopt other means

7. The Time of India, March 7th, 1965.

8. Times (London), March 18th, 1965.

9. Dawn (Karachi) April 17th, 1965.

to gets "the aggression vacated."¹⁰ This statement of Shastri was interpreted by Pakistan as a challenge. In its critorial dated 17th April Pakistan, leading daily 'Dawn' wrote that the motive behind the habitual belligerency of India as of course the big nation chauvinism which finds its expression in the ever increasing tendency to bully India's smaller neighbours. It blamed India for a series of aggression into Pakistan's Borders, and regarded it as New Delhi's impatience to put the country's bloated strength to the test. The editorial comment that to boost the morale of armed forces after bitter memories of the 1962 India-China Conflict to divert the attention of her people from the miseries due to failure of Congress Government, language issue, lower international prestige, India has resorted to an easy alternative of creating border tensions". The editorial further commented that as arguments for continuing the 1962 emergency were wearing thin. New Delhi was trying to stroke up conflicts along the border to create fresh justification for prolonging the emergency.¹¹

In early April, there were ding-dong battles in the Rann of Kutch punctuated by peace overtures. On April 13th Pakistan proposed a cease-fire. Five days later, the Indian Prime Minister renewed the No-war pact offer to Pakistan. India felt that what Pakistan chooses unilaterally to call a disputed territory is in fact undisputably Indian.¹² With this stand

10. Daily Nation, April 17th, 1965.

11. Dawn, April, 17th, 1965.

12. The Economist (London), May 1, 1965.

the diplomatic stalemate was complete. Shortly after, both India and Pakistan announced alert for their armed forces followed by major clashes in which even tanks were used. In the last week of April Pakistan stepped up concentration of forces on Rajasthan border as well as on the cease-fire line in Jammu and Kashmir area. This was followed by the Indian counter action.¹³ It was during this period that Ayub chose to make a statement that India is unnecessarily making a fuse about the Kutch and urged negotiations to settle the "useless quarrel."¹⁴ Bhutto also accused India for aggravating the trouble and stated that Indian action in Rann closely followed a familiar pattern adopted by her in case of Hyderabad, Junagarh and Jammu and Kashmir.¹⁵ On May 1st President Ayub also made a reference to Shastri's threat, "to fight Pakistan on the battle-ground of India's own choice and declared that this would result in a general and total war between two countries.¹⁶ While the fighting in the Rann of Kutch area was on allegations and counter allegations were being made, the foreign powers were too initiative and made efforts to end the hostilities. Both India and Pakistan knew fairly well that the Rann, worthless in itself, almost uninhabited and due for submergence soon, cannot be a battle-ground for long. This was obvious from the Indian attitude as she was giving a low military

13. The Times of India, April 27th, 1965.

14. Ibid.

15. Dawn, April 29th, 1965.

16. Asian Recorder, May 21-27, 1965.

priority to the Kutch affair inspite of Pakistan's repeated large-scale attacks and use of tanks in this terrain. The British initiative and efforts to press India and Pakistan to agree to a ceasefire in the Rann of Kutch appeared optimistic¹⁷ as these were communicated to the two governments on 4th May. The Soviet Union did not appreciate the British mediation and on 8th May appealed to India and Pakistan to settle the conflict in the Rann of Kutch through bilateral negotiations without interference from any outside power. The Americans endorsed the British proposal but were unhappy that Pakistan preferred to use the American Aid military hardware in Kutch operations. The Chinese, however, blamed India for carrying out the U.S. scheme of making, "Asians fight Asians and disrupting Afro-Asian solidarity."¹⁸

Although the two countries in the first week of April had virtually decided not to indulge in further hostilities in the Rann of Kutch area but officially an agreement for a ceasefire was signed on 30th to be effective from 6 A.M. on July 1st. The preamble of the agreement said, that within a month of the ceasefire ministers of the two governments would meet to determine the border in the light of their respective claims and make arrangements for its demarcation. If no agreement was

17. Ibid,

18. Ibid,

reached between the ministers within two months of the ceasefire, the two governments would proceed to set-up a tribunal to decide the issue. This tribunal was to have three members, none of whom would be an Indian or a Pakistani. As the Foreign Ministers of two countries could not meet within two months the matter was left to be decided by a tribunal consisting of Nasrolla Entzani, and Irani diplomat (nominated by Pakistan) L.S. Bebler, a Yugoslav Judge (nominated by India), Judge Gunnar Lagergren of Sweden as Chairman (nominee of Secretary General).¹⁹ This tribunal gave its verdict on 19th February, 1969 awarding about 350 sq. miles in the northern part of the disputed Rann of Kutch to Pakistan and the rest to India. The area which India got in award was mostly sea-marsh, often under water, while Pakistan's share included some crucial elevation points. Though neither side had got all it wanted there was much more criticism of the tribunal's decision in India than in Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi who had succeeded late Lal Bahadur Shastri as Prime Minister in January 1966 resisted all suggestions to nullify the award or to delay its implementation. The curtain on this episode was rung down at Islamabad on 4th July 1969 when Indian and Pakistani plenipotentiaries signed the last documents and maps, in token of finally ending this dispute.

19. S.M. Burke : Pakistan's Foreign Policy, pp.325-326.

A large section of the Indian intelligentsia did not appreciate the Indian decision of referring the Kutch issue to an International Tribunal. They had earlier seen the Pakistani game in the Kutch. In fact it was expected that Pakistan will certainly be a grainer in the bargain however small it may be. It was also realised that Kutch was simply a stepping stone of what was to follow in Kashmir. India in fact played in the hands of foreign powers by agreeing to refer the issue to an international tribunal. Pakistan, on the other hand succeeded in her game to gain elevated points in the Rann of Kutch through the International Tribunal. She was confident that if similar conditions can be created in Jammu and Kashmir also her Western friends may once again succeed in referring the Kashmir issue also on the Kutch pattern.

Infiltration in Jammu and Kashmir

Although the Kutch ceasefire agreement was signed on 30th June, 1965. Pakistan's troops were concentrating in aggressive posture all along the India-Pakistan border on the western front from April onwards. This fact was brought to the notice of U.N. Security Council on 28th May as it posed a serious threat.²⁰ India by that time had information that Pakistan for some time have been preparing for action in Kashmir. Pakistan in fact had planned 'Operation Gibraltar' across

20. Asian Recorder, July 16-22, 1965.

the ceasefire line in Kashmir in May 1965 with a aim to infiltrate large-scale regular army and armed civilian Mujahids (fighters for the faith). The headquarters of this operation was to be Mirree under the command of Major Gen. Akhtar Hussain Malik, G.O.C. 12 Division. President Ayub Khan also addressed the officers of the 'Operation Gibraltar'. Gibraltar force was given intensive training in guerrilla tactics and was instructed to raid across the border headquarters of Indian army formations, supply and ammunition dumps, destroy bridges, lay ambushes disrupt line of communication and attack troops convoys and pro-Indian leaders.²¹ These infiltrators were to cross all along the 470 mile ceasefire line, and

Time, the international weekly news magazine of the U.S., in its issue of September 10, 1965 wrote:

"Indian army is the larger (857000 253/000). but the Pakistanis are much better equipped. In a contest of quantity versus quality, India could probably overrun populous but poorly defended East Pakistan in a matter of weeks, but might meet disaster in the arid uplands of West Pakistan... It might well move with caution, since India's armoured equipment consists mostly of aged British Centurions and U.S. World War II Shermans too much for Pakistan's Patton tanks".

21. Keesings Contemporary Archives (London), Dec. 4-11, 1965.

Rann has got rich reservoirs of petroleum and crude oils. It is this wealth which attracts Pakistan to claim the Rann. In the beginning of 1956 Pakistani troops penetrated into the northern part of Rann called Chhadbet. Pakistanis might have been roaming about into the Rann of Kutch since then. On January 25, 1965 Indian border police found Pakistani troops in occupation of the Rann territory along the international borders for about 18 miles to a depth of nearly 1.5 miles. Pakistan drew up the plan of attack on the Rann in the second week of March and the assault was launched in the early hours of April 5, 1965.

Pakistan concentrated its force on the Kutch border. On April 15, 1965, Pakistan Foreign Minister, Z.A. Bhutto, stated This was 24th parallel was but he claimed about 500 square miles of it for Pakistan. The intensive fighting was going on in the Rann of Kutch, the Communist China separated on the scene as Pakistan's champion, and supported Pakistan's aggression against India. Pakistan police should be allowed to patrol the entire territory of the Rann of Kutch of the north of 24th parallel. The agreement was signed on June 30, and ceasefire became effective from the morning of July 1, 1965.

The Agreement was criticised by the public on several grounds. This arrangement will last only till the boundary has been demarcated", he said. Mujahids and Razakars, trained armed civilian fanatics, as well as regular soldiers in civilian clothes to continue their raids across the ceasefire line into

Kutch. Pakistan claimed in the Rann of Kutch, not only territory in the north but also some areas south of the 24th parallel.

XXX
CHAPTER II

Arabian Sea through the Ages
XXX

Arabian Sea during 16th & 18th Century

Arabian Sea has been played a very important role since 16th Century, though it had witnessed the heaviest traffic through its waters since antiquity. It is bordering only East Africa, South Asia (exclusive of Sri Lanka) and North-west Asia and serving Europe as well for commercial purposes. Europe situated too far up the Arabian Sea, traders could reach it only by covering part of distance overland, which considerably added to the cost of carriage. All Asian and most African countries used it as convenient halting stations for the vessels moving to and fro on the Arabian Sea and beyond it. Some of these halting stations had over the Centuries developed as entrepots for loading and unloading of Cargoes in transit.¹

Till recently Arabian Sea is much more rich in producing oil and other essential ores & cruedes. Geographical attributes and advantages apart, the paradoxical role played by the Arabian Sea in the historical evolution of the sub-continent is a fact of life. Commercial intercourse and political manoeuvrability has always affected its insular character.

The merchants of under endowed Europeans attracted by India's legendary richness hastened eastwards to share in its highly lucrative trades. The portuguese adopted process was continued among others with English, the most advanced naval power of the day and

1. R.C. Sharma : The oceans realities and prospects (Rajesh Publications, New Delhi, INDIA) Page 1.

who eventually ended as the Colonial rulers of the unsuspecting India.²

Traffic-wise Arabian Sea seemed to have been practically free for all from ancient period. Though Oceanic intercourse was relatively more developed than overland trade, it was still minimal due to the sailing hazards, low volume of production, narrow range of market and undeveloped marketing facilities in a primitive milieu, were some of the odds accounting for the sparing use of the sea. However, our evidence testifies to the constant movement of Indians and west-Asians, in their loaded ships and Chinese in the huge junks filled with merchandise, frequenting the Arabian Sea.³ It may be assumed that the dominant spirit was to supplement each other's effort at transmission of goods from place to place. It was become strategically also important because of the intervention of super powers after the withdrawal of British.

The Arabian Sea passed out of Asian hands from 1498 and became the dias of violent contests among the European Nations.⁴ The Portuguese supremacy was, unlike that of Arabs, marked with constant naval engagements, mutual piratic operations, ruthless suppression of rival naval powers. Further, being backed by their parent state, they were unable to conform to any rules, or displayed any sense of responsibility towards their new neighbours taking

2. Ibid, p. 2

3. Ibid, p. 2

4. Ibid, p. 3

advantage of their superiors being too far away. They lost all sense of restraint. Consequently they failed to find any support in their days amongst the local inhabitants of the areas where they settled. Most importantly, as their challenge had dislodged the Arab leaders, the Portuguese own decline, provided an opportunity for other European nations, to enter the field in a big way but all the time, avoiding the pitfalls of the Portuguese conduct exhibited, in the process of acquiring dominance over the Arabian Sea.⁵ Asians had once again being kept out of their old independent oceanic trading activities, now by the Dutch and English successors of the Portuguese.

In 1622, the East India Company with the King of Persia as ally, took the offensive and drove the Portuguese out of Hormuz, thus breaking their hold over the vital north-western gateway. One by one, the tentacles so adroitly spread over the Arabian Sea by Albuquerque were cut and Portuguese sea power in the area waned.

By 1661, Portugal ceded Bombay to the British crown as part of the dowry of their Infanta Catherine when she married King Charles II of England. In 1668, the Crown leased Bombay to the East India Company at a rent of £10 a year.⁶ Bombay, which super-

5. Ibid. p. 3

6. S.N. Kohli : Sea Power and the Indian Ocean (Hill Publishing Company Limited New Delhi), Page 7.

seded Surat as the main depot of the East India Company in 1686, was frequently besieged. In fact, upto the end of the Century, the position of the Company was often very shaky, especially during the Conflict between England and France (1689-97). England was fully occupied in Europe. The French sent a small fleet to India which captured many Britishships. However, the East India Company managed to keep going, protected by its own navy, the Bombay marine.

During the later Mughals its naval power decreased from 3000 vessels to 768 and it could not succeed in standing up to the European Powers navy in the Arabian Sea.⁷ The Marathas took keen interest in developing a navy and troubled both the Mughals and the Portugues on the Arabian sea. Indeed Kanoji Angre was the most daring sea captain of his time. According to K.M. Pannikar, "A control of the Arabian sea waters remained in Indian hands even after the breakdown of the Chola naval power, till the arrival of the Portuguese. The Arabs, who succeeded after the decline of the Chola naval power, were only commercial navigators".⁸

The Portuguese appeared more strong in the Arabian sea than Arabs and Indians joint resistance. Vasco-da-Gama set on foot Indian soil at Calicut in May 1498. In their first encounter, the naval forces of the Egyptians and the zamorin of Calicut beat the Portuguese in 1507, but they were later defeated at Diu ().

7. Devendra Kaushik : The Indian Ocean (Vikash Publishing House)

p. 8

8. Ibid, p. 8

Alfonso Albuquerque conquered Hormuz in 1509 and Goa in 1510. The Portuguese also captured the island of Socotra. In 1538⁹ the Turks captured Aden after a clash with the Portuguese, but acquisition of the fortress of Diu for the Portuguese were in a position to dominate all the ports whence ships could start for the Red sea and in point of fact most of the Arab shipping agents soon left India. Thus, the Portuguese monopolized some sea routes and some commodities; Indian and other shipping could ply between specified ports by obtaining special licences on payment of substantial fees. Thus, Portuguese dominated the main trade-routes throughout the 16th Century.

Thus, the Portuguese inflicted a heavy blow to the Arab, Egyptian, and Persian trade relations with India, from which the latter could never recover. In the succeeding centuries (After 16th century), the Dutch, the Danes, the French and lastly the British maneuvered against one another in an effort to control India's trade with Europe. The Mughal Emperors were conscious of the growing power of the Portuguese in the Arabian sea. After Portuguese failure, the English, French and the Dutch came as traders in the Arabian sea in the opening years of the 17th century.¹⁰ They obtained trading charters from their home governments as well as customs concessions and the permission to build factories and lastly the purchase of lands and villages.

9. Ibid, p. 9.

10. Ibid, p.10.

The British drove the Portuguese from Hormuz in 1622 in alliance with the king of Persia. The British also dislodged the French from Mauritius in 1810. Gradually with the seizure of Maldives and Aden in 1839, they had observed their undisputed mastery over the region.¹¹

The latter half of the 17th century, however, saw a brief revival of the sea power of the oriental peoples. In 1648 the Arabs of Oman drove the Portuguese out of Mascot and invaded Diu and Daman.¹² Towards the close of the century the Arabs seized Mombassa, Zanzibar and Pemba. Later they clashed with the Persians and occupied most of the Persian Gulf islands. The same period also witnessed the rise of the Maratha navy. But the decline of the great Asian states during the 18th¹³ century handicapped their rise as maritime power, with the result that the gifted Maratha and Arab sailors took to piracy.

The Admirals of the Mughals at Cambay and Janjira developed a naval power sufficiently strong to protect the commercial interests of the Empires. Sidis of Janjira offered their allegiance to the Mughals (1670)¹⁴ to withstand the attacks of Shivaji and Aurangzeb gladly accepted it. The Moghul navy in Surat which never counted for much joined the Sidis of Janjira who from that time, till the rise of British naval power in Bombay, were a major power on the West Coast and played a notable part in naval history.

11. Ibid. p. 10

12. Ibid. p. 10

13. Ibid. p. 10

14. Ibid. Opit. p. 58

The strength of the Mughal naval power and Shivaji's own failure to reduce Janjira, led the Maratha King to consider the question of creating a fleet for himself. Though bases were constructed and fleets built Shivaji's own efforts to command the sea met with only a moderate measure of success. The power of Sidis after recurring the support of Aurangzeb had grown greatly and they were able to command the Sea from Goa to Gujarat. It was this mastery of the Konkarn coast that saved the Mughal power in the south during the life of Shivaji.

The power of the Sidis on the Konkarn coast was practically unchallenged till 1683.¹⁵ In that year Sidhoji Gajar the Maratha Admiral took Suvarndoorq and Vijayadoorq (Gheria) important bases on the coast. After the death of Sidhoji, Kanhoji Angre became Admiral. He had captured Colaba from the Sidis and Gradually recovered much of the sea board.¹⁶ His power grew without much support from the central government at Satara which was torn by dissensions, but when the Maratha Empire was reorganized under Balaji I, Angre started his career masterly on the Konkarn sea. His first act was to fortify Gheria, because its ridges offered him a defensive strength to save the Maratha fleet when they were chased by the European nations in the river. A specially selected garrison was stationed there and the fortress was armed and provisioned to withstand both attack and blockade.¹⁷ Behind the citadel on the river front were situated Kanhoji's dockyards.

15. Opelt, p. 58

16. Opelt, p. 59

17. Opelt, p. 59

Thus he tried to move forward and establish observation posts and bases all along the Konkani coast.

Soon the Sidis, the Portuguese and the British realised that a new power had arisen on the sea. But after all Both Sidis and Portuguese were not in a position to face the Kanhoji, it was only the British who met with serious opposition. When the Bombay council realised the menace, they began a system of Convoying their ships under corvettes, acted as escorts, for protection against Kanhoji power but they did not frighten Kanhoji. It led to a continuous naval warfare only.

Angre levied a chauth on the sea and claimed that through the Maratha territorial waters, none could move without his permission and payment of Chauth. This became the reason of confrontation with the British system. Charles Boone, the Governor of Bombay proceeded to attack Gheria in 1717¹⁸ but ended in failure. Again in 1718 Angre was attacked by Boone with a powerful force of 300 sailors and 2500 army men¹⁹ but this attempt also remained unsuccessful and the British Fleet then withdrew. Hearing of this disaster, the Govt. of the time was persuaded to send commodore M Mathews in Bombay in Oct. 1722 to deduce the menace of a rival naval power on the Konkani coast. The support of the Portuguese was also invited and the viceroy of Goa cooperated the British

18. K.M. Panikkar, *Opcit.* p. 60

(Downing, *History of Indian Wars*).

19. *Opcit.* p. 61

forces. They attacked on Kolaba but again remained unsuccessful in their attempt and Boone and Mathews retreated to the safety of Bombay and Portuguese fled on attack.

After this victory against the combined forces of the English and the Portuguese, Kanhoji's power on the Konkan coast was unchallenged. But the Dutch who had not yet come into conflict with the Marathas felt that their dignity had been injured when Kanhoji captured two of their ships. They sent a fleet to attack Ghera (1724)²⁰ They also failed to get victory combined with Portuguese & English forces and the Maratha admiral as an English Historian declares "sailed the Arabian sea in triumph."²¹ Kanhoji tactics were the same as those of Kunjali 150 years earlier. Kanhoji, the greatest naval hero of India passed away in 1729.²² His successors were so weak that they were unable to maintain that greatness of Kanhoji and in 1735 the Bombay government decided to blockade Ghera. Commodore Bagwell set out with a strong force and anchored before Angre's capital. The Maratha Gallivats attacked and set fire to the ships. Bagwell retreating hastily with whatever vessels he could save and reported gloomily to the Bombay Govt. that our strength is not sufficient to withstanding him. The Dutch also had the same fate and as for the Portuguese, Sambhaji

20. Opcit, p.62

21. K.M. Pannikar, Opcit, p. 62

(Kincaid, History of the Maratha People, p. 240)

22. Opcit, p.62.

considered them as easy prey. In 1749 Toolaji fought off the British man-of-war Restoration.²³ At that time the Maratha Navy was supreme from Cutch to Cochin in Arabian Sea.

The British Position had become serious now and a powerful expedition was therefore sent out under Admiral Watson. A strong military force under force of 1400 men under Col. Clive arrived before Gherid.²⁴ This force besieged the fortress after two days battle Toolaji surrendered. The British ships had already forced the entrance into the river. The power of the Angrias on the sea was thus destroyed for ever.

Kanhoji and his successors were the main authority of Marathas naval power, as indeed of the Zamorin at an earlier date should be clearly recognized but they had no oceanic policy. Their field of operations was restricted but remained successful against their opponents. A new power capable of challenging this supremacy had entered there from the Eastern waters.

The French had appeared on the Malabar coast as early as 1527, but regular trade with India started only on 1601.²⁵ It is significant in view that the first regular authority from the French Monarchy as French East India Company by Henry IV for trading in the Ocean was in respect of Madagascar and the Neighbouring islands.

23. Op cit. p. 63

24. Op cit. p. 63

25. Op cit. p. 64

Suffren had captured Trincomallee in August 1782, from which the communications with the west effectively cut. After this short interludes (1782-84), which only served to emphasise the importance of a continuous maintenance of the supremacy of the sea for the control of events in India, and a warning for the future, British authority in the Indian seas was never again questioned till 1941.²⁶

7 The first American expedition to the Arabian Sea dates back to 1784. Two years later American ships reached the Mascarenes and India for trade in spices and tea. Russian sailors I.F. Krughen-shtern and Y.F. Lisianski also sailed in the sea in 1797 on board the vessels of the British navy. This was the period when the British were in alliance with Russia against the France. In 1793 a group of Russian naval officers were sent to Britain for practical training on the British fleet.²⁷

The 18th century saw the rise and fall of the French in India. This was decided primarily by their sea power. England's great advantage over France was the greater volume of her merchant shipping. If, therefore there were equal losses on both sides, France was weakened to a great extent than England. This was one of the chief factors that led to France's final defeat. In naval wars, which last for any length of time, the country with the biggest merchant navy is usually victorious.²⁸

26. *Op cit*, p. 70

27. *Op cit*, p. 71

28. S.N. Kohli, *Sea Power and the Indian Ocean*, p.7

Upto the middle of the century the motive of the British French conflict was purely commercial. It was really no more than a struggle between the two powers for control of the Arabian sea trade. British authority in India had always hung on the thread of safe naval communications. Until the middle of the 18th century, the British hold on India rose and fell with the tide of those communications.

In India, after 1787, the East India Company frustrated every attempt of the Indian potentates to build up an Indian Navy. The British crown assured the people of India that the Royal Navy would protect their shores and that they need not bother themselves about their sea routes. They were asked to appreciate the allegedly noble gesture of the Royal Navy and to be certain of the peace guaranteed by it. The Indian swallowed the policy complacently and were happy that India had not to spend on the naval service of the country. They little realised that the British policy made India a large prison house guarded on three sides by the Royal Navy and on the land frontiers by the British troops. The gigantic Royal Navy was controlled and financed by Great Britain. The dominions supplied only a handful of ships to the Royal Navy, and these ships also came under the operational control of the British Admiralty.

Arabian Sea during 19th Century

In the 19th century, after the French fleet was annihilated at Trafalgar in 1805, Great Britain was the only naval power in the world. It was the century in which it could legitimately be said that Britannia ruled the waves. The mere presence of a British gunboat any where in the seven seas had decisive effects both for maintenance of peace and enforcement of policy.²⁹

The British naval policy in Asia stemmed from her necessity to dominate the colonial domains. It was also to protect the trade routes passing through the Arabian sea and the Mediterranean that a British fleet was stationed in the Mediterranean and the strategical centre gradually moved eastwards.

By 1815, both the Dutch and French had lost their main possessions in the Arabian sea. The British had seized the greater part of the region. The Anglo-French struggle (1740-48), continued through the seven years war (1756-63), the war of American Independence (1778-83) and the Revolutionary war (1793-1802), ending with the defeat of the French in the Napoleonic wars (1803-15).³⁰ The British after occupying aden in 1839 established the most absolute hege-mony of all times in the Arabian Sea. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 was the most important event in the history

29. K.M. Pannikar : India and the Indian Ocean (George Allen & Unwin Pvt. Ltd. (INDIA), Bombay), p.72

30. V.K. Bhasin, Super Power rivalry in the Indian Ocean, p. 18.

of the Arabian sea. West Asia's old prominence was revived with opening of the Suez Canal route. The England attached tremendous importance to the security of the Mediterranean which linked her with the Arabian sea. She lost it once but recaptured it in 1805, ensuring herself supremacy on the seas.

The main aim of the British policy in the Arabian sea region before world war I was to enforce Britain's authority on India against other European contenders. To make her strategy in the Arabian Sea more effective, England spread her naval bases during this period from Aden to Bombay and Maldiva.³¹ The Arabian sea became virtually a British lake and almost every piece of land within it was occupied to prevent the hostile European powers from establishing bases. Upto W.W. II Britain continued to be a predominant colonial and military power in most areas of the Arabian Sea region. The British had entrenched themselves in the Arabian sea by the early years of the 20th Century and there was hardly any power to oppose them even beyond the Sea. Thus, the shape of Britain's hegemonic strategy in the Arabian Sea and beyond had fully emerged by the middle of the 19th Century.

The one development in the 19th Century which affected the Arabian Sea, the construction of the Suez Canal, only strengthened British hold on the Seas. With her unchallenged supremacy in the Mediterranean, the Mediterranean route to India became a private

31. Ibid, p. 18

sub way for Britain. The Red sea became an exclusively British sea lane, bolted and barred at both entrances. Aden assumed the importance it possessed during the time of Egyptian and Arabian navigation in the Arabian sea, and it may be well said that the suez canal became the strongest link in the chain which bound India to Britain.³² The construction of the canal restored the importance of the traditional Red sea Route to Europe. The entire trade of India with Europe had passed through this famous highway till Vasco de Gama arrived at Calicut and open up the cape route. With the opening of canal, India and the Arabian sea became many thousands of miles nearer to the European basis of power and along with an unprecedented development of trade, it also witnessed more effective control of the Arabian sea routes.

It was taken at the time that the opening of this route will once again arouse the cupidity of Venice or her successors. The Mediterranean nations, especially Italy, began to cast longing eyes towards the Indian trade which had been once the monopoly of Venice. The Canal gave to Britain an additional strength in the Arabian sea which further secured her intruders from the west. The axiom of the previous three centuries that the control of the Arabian sea was a corollary to the mastery of the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic was being definitely challenged as events proved, through this aspect of the question was entirely ignored at the time. Britain's supremacy was also challenged by Germany to make a conflict on the seas by imposing blockades and causing economic paralysis.

32. Ibid, p. 18

Earlier, the English had no territory on the shores of the Persian Gulf; but, since they had almost a monopoly of the maritime commerce in the Gulf and were responsible for the security of navigation, they claimed political supremacy there.³³ Great Britain tried to resist by all means in her power the attempt of any other nation to establish itself on the shores of the Gulf. In the Red sea also, international rivalry had begun to show itself. France established herself at Jibuti, just across the Aden. Italy developed the colony of Eritrea and began examining the possibilities of developing a naval base at Massawa.³⁴ She also claimed political interests in the territory of Yemen on the Arabian side of the Red sea, thereby threatening the safety of the vital British centre of Aden. The Red sea also entered into the calculations of German world strategy. Germany knew well enough that entry into the Arabian sea and other from the side of the Atlantic was not possible for her, not only because of Britain's overwhelming naval might, but also because of the geographical position of the British Isles blocking her entry into the Atlantic Ocean. Colonial possessions on the African littoral of the Indian Ocean gave her no definite advantage against Britain. She had to reach the Arabian sea through another route. Germany under William II evolved the grandiose scheme of a direct entry from the side of land into the Persian Gulf. This was to connect Berlin with Baghdad by a direct rail route. It was historically a reply to Vasco da Gama's achievement : the attempt of the land power to outflank the sea.

33. Ibid, p. 19.

34. Ibid, p. 19.

35. Ibid, p. 20.

The Persian Gulf had not played a part in the history of the Arabian sea after Bin Kassim led his seaborne forces into Sind. The Berlin-Baghdad railway would have enabled it to regain the importance, it had lost and provided Germany with a safe back door entrance into the Arabian sea. The conversion of the Persian Gulf into a protected naval area from which the Mastery of the Arabian sea could be challenged was utterly impossible for Germany whose industrial strength was situated thousands of miles away and whose communications with Baghdad had to pass through the territories of other industrially backward states. The Turkish Empire was not in a position to help the German allies to work through that scheme. At best it would have been a defensive measure protecting the flank of Turkey. The attack on Mesopotamia, undertaken across the sea from bases in India could no doubt have been effectively prevented, if the scheme had materialised. But aggressive action to challenge the mastery of the sea would have been impossible. German submarines could have crept into the Arabian sea, harassed the trade of India like the pirates of old, but to achieve anything more than that a complete reorganisation of the hinterland would have been necessary.³⁶

The visit of Lord Curzon to the Gulf in 1903 was meant to demonstrate Britain's political control over it. At the time of the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907³⁷, Lord Grey stated definitely that the Persian Gulf lay outside the scope of the convention.

36. Ibid, p. 21.

37. Angus F. Dodd; *A Short History of the British Empire* (London J.M. Dent and Sons 1925) page

He added that the Russians had acknowledged the British interests in that region of the Arabian sea and that these interests were to be maintained by Great Britain as before.

From about the middle of the 19th Century up to the middle of the 20th Century Britain dominated India both economically and politically. Parts of the Arab world were also under her economic and political influence. After 1857 British suzerainty was finally established in India and in 1882 they occupied Egypt. One of the objects being the protection of their economic and political interests in the Indian Empire.³⁸ The Ottoman Government had become weak both economically and politically and heavily indebted to European Powers, especially Britain. It was in fact the economic interest of Britain in the Ottoman Empire that kept 'the sick man of Europe' alive until the 20th Century. Furthermore, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the final purchase of the majority of the shares of the company by Benjamin Disraeli established the supremacy of the British in the commercial activities in the Arabian sea. The British were now the main agents of trade between India and the Arab countries through Arabian sea.³⁹ It is difficult to survey here with any justification the vast amount of imports and exports that took place between India and the Arab world during this period. During the later half of the 19th Century the beginnings of industrialization and better trade facilities could be observed in India. Fast developing ports, railway communications,

38. Ahamad Maqbul : Indo-Arab Relations ()
Page 92.

39. Ibid. p. 93

the exploitation of coal, the beginnings of the cotton industry in Bombay and Almedabad, all these factors must have boosted up trade relations with the Arab countries through Arabian sea.⁴⁰ It may be observed that it was neither the Arab world nor India that benefited directly by this trade. India's economy was geared to British interests. In fact, indigenous industries and handicrafts were destroyed by the British, while the export of raw materials continued to feed the industries of England through Arabian sea trade route.

The nineteenth century witnessed the disappearance of Indian-built ships from the high seas.

40. Ibid, p. 93

The Position During World War I & II

Setting

The new post war environment of the Arabian sea is an extraordinary phenomenon of our times. In an explosion of Political independence, as many as 36 free states have come into being within a quarter century, in place of the previous four. They are fired not only by a sense of belonging to their national homes but also to the continent in which they are located and the sea which washes their shores. That gives them a sense of patriotism, regional orientation, and continental destiny upto a point. This is because no other part of the globe is such a riotous mosaic of the rifts born out of the aftermath of imperial domination and colonialism, Economic ideology and social outlook, racism of colour, and bigotry of belief. This is a region of starnning poverty and fabulous wealth, chronic depressions and new expectations, deep pacifism and habitual bellicosity, imperatives of peace and inevitabilities of war. Truely speaking, it has only now entered the world stage in its own right, and its future is still very much in the making.

From an open sea, inhabited by several independent peoples on its shores and its islands, to a sea dominated by one people, and to an open sea once again - such has been the Arabian sea's historical cycle. A large number of independent states have come into being, larger than ever before. They have their characteristic outlook on the sea which, more than ever in the past, is compounded by affinities with the hinterland and beyond because of the fast relay of contacts and influence over the entire continent. The Arabian sea itself has assumed a different look and developed

additional attractions and situations. The lifting of the British imperial curtain has opened up new vistas that extend beyond the sea's conventional limits. No country can escape from the individual as well as cumulative effects of these happenings. And India in particular, for although no longer a sinecure of the orient as in the past, it has a special status because of its size and location. These effects emanate from the residual remnants of the past, emergence of new states, regional impacts, emotional and ideological factors, socio-economic pulls, and interests of the outside powers.

In this Indian Ocean region there were only two states more or less independent before the second world war - Egypt and Ethiopia. After the War, during the succeeding three decades, altogether ---- independent states have emerged, -- littoral and -- island, located in Africa, the Middle East & the Indian subcontinent. They may be best viewed as lying in these regions, although some of them have a bi - regional character, such as those around the Red sea in the west which are actually on regional cross-roads.

The Arabian sea is dotted with strategically placed islands, some the territories of countries, others sovereign states. Of the latter, all went in for republican forms of government on achieving independence during the last decade. The assumption of nationhood by these countries coincided with the new strategic importance of the Arabian sea though it was not necessarily related to it. Yet in the last few years the island republics have not been able to keep too far away from the politics-strategic game being enacted

on their doorsteps and a system of interaction between the internal politics of the island republics and a new strategic character of the Arabian sea has taken root. This system of interaction, both elaborate and complex, is likely to grow as the Arabian sea acquires greater strategic sensitivity.

If there was a period when the Arabs could have formed a single state from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf, it was the quarter century between the two W. Wars, when political texture was still being woven. Instead of unifying, the Arabs split and even Bahrain of 400 Square miles preferred to be sovereign and independent. Actually the formation of the new-Arab states was accompanied by memorable conspiracies and under-cutting among themselves, whatever the facade they presented over Israel. Indigenous nationalism has always taken precedence over Arab nationalism, even though both have displayed unusual strength.

Arabian Sea during I & II W.W.

During the I W.W., the Arabian Sea did not become an important theatre of operation. Hostilities were confined to two areas only - The middle East and East Africa, and the German submarines, so active in European waters did not extend their operations to the Arabian sea. The post W.W. I period saw many significant changes in the Arabian sea. The Middle East region, whose importance rose due to the substitution of oil for coal as the chief source of power, changed hands from the Turks to the British.

The picture that the Arabian sea presented in the period

Immediately before the Great War of 1914-18 was something like this Britain sailed the Arabian sea as an absolute mistress. Her power was over whelming at every point, and no nation could have contested her authority in the slightest degree.⁴¹ But It was clear that the storms were gathering. The major European nations had acquired interests in the Arabian sea area and beyond this. France, Italy and Germany had territories on the African Coast and the names of Diego Suarez, Jubuti, Massawa and Mogadiscio were coming into prominence. Germany, a prisoner in the Baltic, was developing schemes for a land route which would give her an independent entry into the Arabian sea.

The war of 1914-18 eliminated Germany from the Arabian sea and the Indian Ocean. The establishment of the independent state of Iraq and the acquisition of interests in that country in the form of the Mosul oilfield were the replies, then considered adequate to a threat to the Arabian sea from the side of the Persian Gulf.⁴² But the tendencies that were apparent before 1914 became only more pronounced in the interlude between the two wars. At enormous cost, France developed Deigo Saurez into a powerful naval base. Her object in doing so was in no way concealed from the world. The French Minister of Marine declared that the naval base will command the Arabian sea and neighbouring waters.⁴³ Fascist

41. K.M. Pannikar, India & the Indian Ocean, p. 76.

42. Ibid, p. 76.

43. Ibid, p. 76.

Italy was not to be out done. Mussolini had made up his mind that the future of Italy lay on the sea Massawa on the Red sea coast was converted into a great naval base and it was the boast of the Duce that he had cut the connection between India and Suez canal.

The acquisition of Abyssinia was also a part of this great scheme. Only the small hinterland of Eritrea, Massawa could not be much of a danger, but with a large territory with undeveloped resources and a climate in the higher altitudes suitable for European colonisation, an empire could be held and defended independently, even if communications were cut off with Italy. Abyssinia and Eritrea with a trained native army could meet any challenge coming from the sea. Besides, with the strength that such an empire can develop, Massawa will cease to be merely a naval station but a great base from which the Red sea can be controlled.⁴⁴

Between the Abyssinia and the Italian colony lay the small British colony of somaliland, which it was not easy to defend. If in case of war the intervening area could be conquered then the new Abyssinian empire of Mussolini would not only have effectively cut the connection between the Mediterranean and India, but have entered the Arabian sea as a considerable naval power. Her position in the Red sea would have been impregnable. Aden would have not only been rendered useless for controlling the entrance, but itself menaced from the land side in view of the political relations established by Italy with yemen which had taken a more definite shape. The war came five years too soon for Mussolini and his schemes for converting Abyssinia and Eritrea into a great land

⁴⁴. Ibid, p. 77.

empire were only half completed when the war broke out. Massawa had surrendered when the land campaign broke the power of Italian and the dream of dominating the Red sea and controlling the Gulf of Aden disappeared with it.⁴⁵ It was demonstrated clearly that overseas colonies for nations who do not enjoy mastery of the seas are no more than hostage in the hands of the enemy. They constitute no great threat to anyone and the British could afford to enjoy Massawa and Diego Suarez in the period before the II World War.⁴⁶ The creation of a small Royal Indian Navy was the matter of greatest significance. After the destruction of the Maratha naval power in 1751, Indians were sailing the sea for the first time in warships, no doubt small in size but symbolic of the resuscitation of the old forces which had for at least two millenia held the mastery of the Arabian sea and the Bay of Bengal both. The surrender of Germans meant that the Royal Indian navy had thereafter no serious rival at sea and the British Empire could be considered safe against outside attacks because past threats had come from the France, Germany, Italy and Russia in this area. After I W.W., France became an ally, Italy and Germany was beaten, and Russia lay in chaos. The wealthy united states first time appeared in the world scene with desires. Japan was a British ally too in the War. The Royal Navy's Mediterranean fleet was the most powerful naval formation in the world between the two world wars. But England soon had to give up her naval superiority

45. Ibid, p. 78.

46. Ibid, p. 78.

at the Washington Conference in 1922 and accepted equality with America.⁴⁷ This treaty along with such other factors as the economic decline of England, obliged the British to review their presence in the Arabian sea region and the other Indian ocean regions also. The post war national awakening in Asia also added to the importance of the Arabian sea region.

In the second world war the Arabian sea was the ^{scene} ~~sece~~ of greater naval activity than during the I W.W. In August 1940, the Italian forces moved into somaliland, which resulted in a clash with the British. The allies sent their reinforcements to Russia via the Persian Gulf, and there was joint Anglo-Russian action in Iran to Prevent Reza shah from taking sides with the Axis powers.⁴⁸ Though deprived of the fruits of their mastery of the Bay, Japanese submarines began to appear in the Arabian sea and to take a heavy toll of mercantile shipping. Britain reacted with vigour by the occupation of French islands of Madagascar and Diego Suarez in Indian Ocean, but the Arabian sea could not be cleared of Japanese submarines and the west as well as the east coast of India remained exposed to the depredations of the under seacraft for a considerable time.⁴⁹

Oceanic strategy has therefore entered into the considerations of the Indian question with a dramatic suddenness which could

47. D.K. Kaushik, *The Indian, Ocean*, p. 12

48. *Ibid*, p. 12

49. *Ibid*, p. 12

not have been foreseen before March 1942. The whole question of Indian defence had to be reconsidered both in the light of history and of recent events. The ~~xxx~~ era of protected sea communications ended for India⁵⁰ and the question of the control of oceanic areas surrounding India has again become important.

The period following the second world war witnessed a veritable upsurge of national freedom in the area. The colonial powers of Europe had to withdraw from India and other neighbouring countries. India, Pakistan, Aden and Mauritius, became independent in 1947-48, 1968. By 1971, with the exception of the Trucial states in the Persian Gulf the entire Arabian sea littoral area consisted of Independent sovereign states.⁵¹ Britain entered NATO SEATO and CENTO and tried to play the role of a great power. Many of these newly independent states like India, & U.A.R. played an active role in the non-aligned movement and in the 3rd conference of the non-aligned states held at Lusaka in 1970, adopted a resolution.⁵² calling upon all states to establish a zone of peace in the Arabian sea and the Indian ocean. Britain's announcement to withdraw from the East of Suez was the most important factor to disturb the balance of power in the Arabian sea and also in the Indian Ocean, Western powers are still continuing their neo-colonial onslaught against the newly independent countries. Conspiracies are afoot to exploit the enormous natural resources of these states which are of great strategic and economic importance for the West.

50. Ibid, p. 12 51. Ibid, p. 12. 52. Ibid, p. 13.

XX
CHAPTER III

Power Struggle in the Area During the
Colonial Period
XX

(a) Arabian Sea during Mesopotamian Campaign

Modern Iraq was known as Mesopotamia in ancient period. Boundaries of Mesopotamia were unlimited till 1914, but the boundaries of Iraq have been demarkated after 1914. Mesopotamia was included with the area of Arab sub-continent in west and western limit of Iran's Plateau. It is surrounded with Armenia in north and mountains of Asia minor and Persian Gulf in south. The lower area of Euphrates and Tigris rivers basin known as Mesopotamia. In the north of Iraq is Turkey, Iran in East Persian Gulf is and some portion of Arab States in the south and Arab, Israel and Syria are in the west. Mesopotamia was divided in upper and lower Mesopotamia. Northern part of it is called upper Mesopotamia and extended in south till Bagdad. Its length is about 300 miles and about 100 miles wide in north. Its northern part is greenish and southern part is mostly desert. The area of Lower Mesopotamia is expanded downward from Bagdad to Persian Gulf. In Mesopotamia there are some important lakes and narrow waterways. Desert area of Mesopotamia is difficult for military observers of air and Artillery. Mesopotamia and Persian Gulf are most hot places of the world. Climate is not suitable for military activities in Mesopotamia. Minerals and alloys are not present in proper amount. Communication means are very poor in Mesopotamia, only one railway line is passing through Samara to Bagdad. Roads are not therefore the water ways are important there. Water supply is not properly arranged. There are so many difficulties in military activities. Communication was mainly performed by rivers. Basra-Arab strait was important

because through this the merchantships were passed and got entry into Arabian sea from where they proceeded towards East. Important harbour of Mesopotamia is Basara. It is used in 1914 for military actions but faced more difficulties there. Shore of this harbour is not suitable for loading and unloading.

All military problems therein, whether strategical, tactical or administrative are affected by local conditions to an extent rarely met with in any theatre of War. Nearly all the conditions combine to create difficulties, there is little to alleviate them, and most may be ascribed either to a lack of water or surfeit of it. Far away from the rivers want of water makes operations impossible, while near them the excess of water is almost as great a source of trouble.

In 1914 the population of Mesopotamia was about 20 or 25 lakhs. Mostly Arabs were established in plains and others were either in cities or in northern & Eastern plains. Arabs were very dare and expert in Gurilla tactics and followers of Islam.

Under the turkey Administration Mesopotamia was divided in many vilayaton or provinces. Administration was not much more successful and some times revolts had been taken place there. Persia, Bakhtari Pradesh, Mohamira, Kuwait, Alhasa and Nezd were situated around the Mesopotamia. Although the Arabs hated the Turks, but on the time of war they fought with tarks against Britishers because of Islam. Turks never believed in Arabs mostly in time of war because they attacked by them when they defeated or retreated.

Many super nations had benefited from this rich area in the Ancient period. Turkey occupied Mausul and Bagdad between 1520 and 1586 A.D. From that time Dazala and Farat rivers had been used as a boundary of Persia. In 1603 Persia again attacked the Mesopotamia and occupied Bagdad again after twenty years. But in 1638 Turkey again captured Bagdad from Persia and then till 1917 Bagdad remained under the possession of Turkey.

Turkey revolution in 1908 was welcomed by the Public of Mesopotamia but further it was not remain constant. Because it was influenced by Jermans. Jerman Officers and Ambassadors had got much more rights in Provincial & Central Administration. Therefore no reforms were prevailed in Mesopotamia. War with Italy in 1911 and Balkan in 1912-13 had made Mesopotamia very poor and critical in position. People of Mesopotamia revolted against Turkey and waterway between Bagdad & Persian Gulf had not remained secure due to these agitations against Turkey Govt. From the Arabs of southern Mesopotamia had created the situation of revolution in that area and many Sardars had interested to make pact with Russia. At the time of European war, the situation of Mesopotamia was not satisfactory but people were worried there.

In this time Pan-Islamic agitation had taken place there and it was used as a political weapon. Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan had established a group to conduct this agitation. But it remained unsuccessful deu to the participation of Turkey. Because Arabs were not pleased with Turkey. Its objectives and aims remained unfulfilled.

From the coming of Turkey Party in power and till the period of Balkan war, the Policy of Turkey remained dangerous to the interests of Britishers in Mesopotamia and Persian Gulf areas. German were most powerful in these areas and busy to strengthen their trade position in these areas. Turkey was trying to impose political pressure on the authorities of these areas as they compelled to Shekh of Kuwait to adopt the nationality of Turkey and this was the voilation of agreement between the Governments of Turkey and British. This situation was terminated from the political pressure of British and Russian Governments. Turkey had tried much to get possession on Qatar and some sea parts of Trucial side. In 1912 there had been some liberal change in the views of Turkey in favour of Britishers, therefore in 1913-14 many agreements and treaties had been made between Turkey and British countries.

Germany was in the view thinking from the begning to create hate against Britishers in the minds of Turkish.

Aim of this was to stand the Turkish against Britishers in war and damage their trade in the east. Jerman's interfere was continued in the Turkish affairs from 1875 A.D. Germans were eager to get superiority in Turkish territory. In the begning she was trying to create hate and differences between British and Russia taking the affairs of Turkey, Persia and India. After that she also tried to create differences between Turkey and British empire to take the affairs of Egypt, Arabia, Mesopotamia

and Persian Gulf. Germany was always in the view of capturing Turkey, so she was trying to weaken the Turkey. Germany was eager to establish a great empire from north sea to the Gulf of Persia and Austria, Balkan states and Turkey could remain under it. This created a fear in the security system of Egypt and the eastern areas of British empire. They had started a construction of railway line from Asia minor to Mesopotamia and got a proposal to link Mediterranean sea and Persian Gulf by railway line. These railway lines had been constructed from political and strategical point of views. Another railway was constructed from Koniya to Persian Gulf. Here it is important that the Germany had got the permission for extension of railway till Persian Gulf at that time when Britain was busy in South Africa.

Turkey's relations with their neighbours were not satisfactory in Mesopotamia. There was a fear of war between Persia and Turkey in 1842 due to border affairs. Agreements had remained fail there and status quo prevailed till 1905. Urmia was attacked by Turkey, therefore, a new problem had taken place and till 1913 no decision could be done. On account of these problems & disputes Turkey had lost Persia's sympathy. Turkey also started hate to Russians after sometimes of I.W.W. outbreak and Persia was also against Russia. Therefore after sometimes Persia had sympathetic attitude towards Turkey. Persia and Turkey were agreed with the ideas of Germany. So Persia became an important centre for Propaganda and other activities to the Turkey and Germany. But Sheikh of Mohmira had favoured the Britishers. Although

Arabs were not pleased with Turkey but supported them against Britain. At the time of war, Sheikh of Kuwait revolted against Turkey.

Turkey army was again organized in 1882 by Germany. Lt. Col. Von der Goltz made all possible reforms in Turkey army. Army service had made compulsory to all the peoples of country. But this process became unsuccessful due to the opposition of the peoples of some classes.

Sultan of Turkey was the supreme commander of army assisted by a supreme military council and its deputy head was Field Marshal Von der Goltz. Turkey military was divided in active army, active army reserve, and territorial army. In 1914 its strength was 70 Divisions (2,850,000 soldiers). Air force was not adequate therefore supported by Germans. For weapons & supply etc. they were depended upon Germans.

Arrangement of modern fortification was absent in Mesopotamia. Only Turkey Gunboats and warships were available to take action on waterways. Mesopotamia provided an straight way to the troops from Middle Europe to South-west Asia. Mesopotamia in one side has sandy plateau of Arabia, Armenia and mountains of Kurdistan and in the other side Persia.

North-east Flank of Bagdad gave an entrance to the invaders. Through this any one could reached to Persia and then Afghanistan. There were some difficulties in Mesopotamia for military activities as follows:

- (a) More distance;
- (b) incomplete Bagdad railway and wanteness of land ways;
- (c) Local made things and scarcity of foodgrains;
- (d) Unsufficient ships and difficulty in navigation in the rivers of Dajala and Farat;
- (e) Unsuitable climate;
- (f) Basara could be attacked easily by waterway;
- (g) There was no place of surprise and concealment activities.

Besides these, there were some advantages as to harrase the Britain, it could be compelled to keep her military forde in middle-east, otherwise that could be used in other places. Britain felt more difficulties in directing and conducting the campaign in Mesopotamia because of the above critical situation and obsticles, but Turkey having a small army-force could be easily opposed them.

In east, India was a good base for Britain. So Mesopotamia was easily attacked from the side of North and North-west through the deserts of Persia and mountains of Afghanistan. Safety of Britains front was depended upon the maintanance of superiority in the Arabian sea. Britain was interested in the Persian Gulf, therefore she remained conscious always when any interference taken place there.

After the conquest of Bagdad in 1638 by the Turkish Sultan Murad IV, the first border settlement with Persia was arrived at as early as possible. Since both in the north (Kurds,

Armenians) and in the south (Arabs) the boundary cut through traditional settlement areas of tribes which regarded as their natural masters neither the Turks nor the Persians, the course of border was not laid down exactly or in any detail, but conformed, for the most part, to tribal loyalties and toponyms. This was short time settlement. Although boundary disputes flared up there after, in the Kurdish-Armenian boundary district, they could be settled on the basis of the 1639 agreement but proved insufficient. Shatt-al-Arab constituted a natural border, belonged to the ottoman Empire. In 1823 Persia occupied it, Britain and Russia offered their good offices. On 15 May, 1843 a Turkish-Persian-British-Russian boundary commission met in the Turkish city of Erzerum to try to reach a final border settlement based on the agreement of 1639 but after four years they reached to a final settlement which was also remained unapplicable because of some short comings and dropped for the time being. Policies of Britain and Russia had been at cross-exacerbating Anglo-Russian tensions. Russia's interests centred on the Persian Provinces of Azerbaijan, due to economic and strategic considerations related to Turkey. Britain's position on the boundary question differed from that of Russia. They interested in the Shatt-al-Arab for their policy towards the Gulf, which became important owing to growing British influence in Mesopotamia and Arabistan.

Russia pursued maritime interests in the Shatt and the Gulf, was surprised by Britains unilateral action and rejected

the Anglo-Turkish agreement. But after Britains assurance for supporting their interests Russia accepted it. In the Shatt-al-Arab region, the course of border was settled in accordance with the Treaty of Erzerum of 1847, and the Shatt remained Turkish waters for its entire expanse except for the restrictions at Muhammarah and Abadan. The fixing of the entire boundary was assigned to a four power commission, which was to mark the border on location, based on the 'carte identique' of 1869. Early in 1914 the work was began but the outbreak of war prevented the recognition of the border by Turkey and Persia.

Mesopotamian campaign was fought only strategical causes. It was inspired by Germany and started by Turkey against Britain but lastly Britain had got victory. To examine the causes of Mesopotamian campaign, a study of interests of many countries is essential here. Russia was interested to enhance her enfluence in Middle Asia. Therefore Russia was eager to occupy Basxra harbour after capturing the Mesopotamia Russia advanced towards Darn Deleez and Persian Gulf and worried the Britain in regard to the attack on India through Arabian sea. To check the Russia, Britain established relations with Afghanistan and in 1878, Britain helped the Turkey against Russia and got Sypres island from Turkey.

Germany was also eager to establish a great empire, for that purpose Germany advanced towards Africa and Middle-Asia and established relations with Turkey.

Britain captured the Cyprus island at the time of Russian-Turkish war. Britishers also captured her ally Egypt. Russia was Turkey's enemy and Britain made an agreement with Russia, so all these were the causes of her unhappiness. Turkey wanted ownership on the oil of Middle Asia and also wanted to establish impact on the Muslims of that area.

The construction of railway line to Bagdad increased the strategical importance of Mesopotamia for the Britishers. Germany and Turkey both were interested in the area of Persian Gulf. This area was in the influence of Britishers from a very long time. Britain was worried about the security of India due to the activities of opponents. The religious movement inspired by Germany & Turkey was dangerous for the Britain, therefore the defence from that, had become most essential to them. Defenders of oil pipe lines from Susat to Abadan, were pressurised by the Turkey and could be attacked at any time. Therefore it was also necessary for Britain to help them. All the four powers had their interests in Mesopotamia. France, Britain and Russia were in one side and Turkey, Germany and Austria were at another side. On the break of war Turkey was compelled to recapture the Threes province and told to block the oil supply way of Britishers in Mesopotamia.

Britain was ready to protect her interests in Mesopotamia and sent her forces there. India Government was made in charge of this campaign. India Government was ordered to send army immediately in Shatt-al-Arab area by British cabinet at 2 Oct.

1914. Following units of 6th Pune Div. under Brig. Gen. W.S. Delamen were got orders of preparedness to go across the Arabian sea till 10th Oct. 1914 : 1. 16th Inf. Brigade; 2. 22nd Saperas and Minoras companies. 3. One Lee Indian Mountain Artillery with some units of Medical, supply and Transport. This was called 'D' Force'. Britishers were interested in the areas around the Persian Gulf. They supported and helped the Sheikh of Mohamira and started their campaign in Mesopotamia against Turkey and Germany plans had been made and military & Political rights had been given to Gen. W.S. Delamen to strengthen the British position and capture the Basara in Mesopotamia. Sheikhs of Kuwait & Mohmira were in the favour of Britishers. Sir Piyarsi Kox and Captain Hemilton were appointed to help Gen. Delamen there. 'D' Force was advanced from Bombay Port to Bahrain island on 16th Oct. under the escort of four naval ships. This was propagated that British Govt. was compelled to send army in Mesopotamia to protect the interests of Arab peoples and their Allies and she was not in a mood to attack. 'D' Force was sent from Baharain to Shatt-al-Arab on 3rd November. Fao Fort was destroyed by Turkish. British D force was landed near Fao village to check the opponants and ultimately captured the Fort. Leaving 117th Maratha Battalion as a garrission troop in Fao, remaining troops proceeded towards Abadan oil refinery and camped in Sanniya. Beside facing some small attacks by Arab Kabaylis Gen. Delimen completed his planning of land forces on the opponants area. But after two days (11 Nov.) British advance gaurd faced counter attack by Turkish and made it fail.

Gen Delamen's aim was to advance through land way till Shamsamiya area. But due to the information of Turkish possibility of attack, protection responsibility of oil refinery and some slakness in sending military from India, compelled him to stay there. Mesopotamia campaign had also suffered due to heavy rain, it was first experience to them.

Gen. Barret reached at Shatt-al-Arab in 13th Nov. with another troop and on 14th Nov. reaching in Sanniya camp he accepted the charge of Mesopotamia command. He was ordered to capture Basra by India Government. First he ordered Gen Delomen to the enemy from Sehan. For this he deployed his army in adequate positions, then attacked on the second position of the enemy and pushed it towards north. After this battle he established his possession on the Turkish camp. Many casualties and arrests had been made in this activity. British troops felt some difficult experiences in this working area, but were superior than Turkish.

On the information of Turkish advance towards Basra for the purpose of attack, Gen. Barret directed his troops to advance towards sahil. After some close combats, British troops got success on the enemy.

A brief telegraphic message was sent to India Government on 20th Nov. about the situation and made a plan to attack on Basra. After some difficulties he became success in capturing

Basra on 23th Nov. 1914 and Union Jack was hoisted in a main building of Basra. In this way the Britain got many advantages from this victory as there was no fear in protection of oil fields and refineries, security of British interests in Persian Gulf and adjacent areas had become more strengthen, relations with Sheikh of Mohamira became strong & firm and first decided aim of Mesopotamia campaign to be fulfilled.

By sending a brief appreciation of the situation, Sir P. Kox suggested viceray to attack quickly on the Bagdad, and Gen Barret also accepted this. But some re-suggestions were given to the Sir P. Kox & Gen. Barret in this reference by India Government and suggested to attack first on Kurna. Because Kurna was a strategical place, situated at the bank of Shatt-al-Arab. It was important for the control of whole Gulf water ways. Entire Persian-Arbistan could be protected from the Turkish attacks, and communication lines could be protected. Therefore Kurna was attacked and captured on 19th Dec. according to the secretary of state and military secretary in India Government. In this way the first part of Mesopotamia campaign had been completed.

Being defeated in Amara & Muzayra, the remaining Turkish troops, reorganised near Nasiriya and Shuk-Ash-Shiyukh. It was suggested and emphasised on the importance of keeping control in the triangle of Basra-Kurna-Nasiriya. Turkey was prepared to do counter attack. For this purpose some auxiliary forces were sent to Basra from Masul and constantnople. Turkish Troops were collected in the south of Israel tomb till the end of Dec.

and then camped near Muzaibila. They wanted to attack on Basra after advancing from Nasiriya. But at that time an information was collected that Turkish were defeated badly by Russia in Kakeshus. Therefore some part of that auxiliary force was sent in Arminiya or Kurdistan to help them and this affected the Mesopotamia campaign. Turkish intensified their movements near Kurna and captured sand hills-posts. But after some time British commander Gen. Barret snatched the Sand wills pass from Turkish and returned back to Muzaira. Changed situations compelled Gen. Barret to demand auxiliary force for the purpose of protecting Basra and Mohmira till 26th Jan. Sheikh Gazaban and Jihad were eager to attack on Ahwaz and oil fields, and Turkish troops with Arab-Kabayalies were advancing to attack on Basra from western desert areas.

Therefore on the request of Gen. Barret, India Government arranged to send 12th Inf. Bn. under Maj. Gen. Davison till 1st February to Basra. Kurna was attacked in 29-30 Jan. but remained fail. It was informed that a major part of public had revolted in Ahwaz and Persian Government remained fail to give any security to the Europeans there but soon Gen. Barret controlled the situation by sending Kumuk. Till this time Turkish had become strong in Arbistan, Lower Farat and Basra was badly affected due to the public revolt. The entire area of working was badly affected from flood and unrest. So every military movement and fortification remained unsuccessful and Britishers were worried about the reorganisation of Turkish and local militia. Still

this the Britishers had captured Shaiba and Ahwaz after facing some difficulties and casualties. Opponent forces had left their idea to advance or attack further and stayed in Gadir Camp. India Govt. decided to increase the strength of 'D' force by sending 33rd Inf. Brigade and Hampshire Howitzer Battery in Mesopotamia on 7th March. Lord Crue informed that 30th Inf. Brigade was sent from Egypt to increase the strength of 'D' force in Mesopotamia on 10th March. In this way the decided target of keeping two Divisions in Mesopotamia was completed, but still there was wantness of Artillery, Sappers and Pioneers.

Turkish counter attack efforts had remained fail and with the possession of Shaiba and Ahwaz, Britishers had become strong. This was strengthened more by reaching Gen. Nixon to take over the Mesopotamia command and rearranging the 'D' force. Arbistan and Amara were also captured by Gen. Garinze consequently in 16th May 1915 and 3rd June 1915. Defeated Turkey troops had been pursued to the Kut-al-Amara. Gen Garinze decided to advance towards Kuwait. They felt some difficulties in sand hills operation but became success in capturing Nasiriyah on 24th July 1915. Turkish adopted defensive policy and defeated by Britishers here. After this Britishers captured Kut under Gen. Nixon and Gen. Townsend in 29th Sept. 1915 and at pursued Turkish till the Azeziya.

After capturing Basra, they again advanced towards Baghdad in March 1915, under the Indian C-in-C Gen Nixon. Britishers were in advantageous positions because they had captured all the

strategical places related to their advance to Baghdad. Baghdad was also captured in Sept. 1915 and eastern countries had to be effected by this possession of Baghdad in Asia. Gen Nixon appreciated Baghdad as political, commercial and strategical bases and sent a message to the Indian C-in-C of this reference. In this reference a cabinet committee was formed and this was learnt by the committee that what were the consequences after advance and capturing the Baghdad, therefore one Division and some cavalry and Artillery batteries were sent to support the Gen Nixon and Gen. Hordings in Mesopotamia through Arabian sea from India. British troops had been made so strong by sending force that they could maintain this possession in future. Gen. Nixon and Gen. Town send discussed this matter carefully and advanced from the right bank of the river through the small ships. Although Turkish tried to do a counter attack against British troops but remained unsuccessful and faced heavy casualties and loss of supply and communication system. British troops too faced some difficulties in this action but succeeded in their aim.

Kut fortification was strengthened and German Gen. Vonder Goltz' could be stopped by this activity. Reorganization process could be completed and actions to be started for freeing the Kut. But Turkey Troops, with firm intention, made an attack on the incomplete fortification of Kut and continued it and lastly they remained fail and surrendered before British troops. British interest was fulfilled and Mesopotamia campaign had been ended. But problems remained alive there and disputes continued in that area till today either by super powers or by local powers.

Because of these problems the Arabian sea region and their littorals are under tension till today. Arabian sea had played an important role in Mesopotamia campaign because India was incharge of this campaign and resuffling was completed from India through this sea.

B. Arab Oil Embargo & British Policy in Arabian Sea

Each of the European powers wished to obtain as strong an influence as possible in an empire that appeared to be on the point of importance in the world. The Russia was an obstacle blocking her south wards expansion and preventing her from having free access to the Mediterranean. Simply her expansionist ambitions were to some extent frustrated by Britains influence in this Arabian sea region.¹ France was interested in securing predominance in Syria and some states of this region. Italy and Germany were also rapidly overtaking Britains previously paramount influence in Arabian sea area. With the Baghdad railways her main instrument check British predominance in the Persian Gulf and beyond, India. If British interests were maintained and strengthened at sea by control of the Suez canal and the Persian Gulf, then it was considered that the British empire would be safe against both Russia & Germany threats.

Oil had become important and an area of such promising oil potential as the Middle East and Arabian sea region would have attracted attention for this reason alone. In the early years of this century oil was coming gradually to achieve a more important position in the British economy. Oil had many advantages over coal as a fuel and on a weight for weight basis, provided more power used less space and was considerably cleaver and easier to handle than coal was.

1. Marientkent, Oil & Empire, P. 4.

However, at this time virtually all Britain's oil came from the U.S.A. and Russia and from the Dutch East Indies and Roumania, but except Mexico, all those countries were outside Britians control; Indeed the world's largest oil concerns were of Americans, Russian and Dutch nationality. As a result Mesopotamia and Persia acquired even wide significance than the strategic and commercial considerations already indicated would suggest. British companies could hope to obtain them only if they had at least the tacit support of their government. In the Arabian sea region an Anglo Persian oil company was clearly a purely British company.

British oil policy had two major steps, first was the Govt's decision to buy a majority shoreholding in D'Arcy's Anglo-Persian oil company. The public was told to help ensure adequate and reliable oil supplies for the Navy in time of war or peace. The oil was valuable not only for propelling ships, lorries and aeroplanes, but also on account of the fact that some varieties contain a significant proportion to toluol a basic constituent of explosives. It was therefore essential to create an efficient machinery for planning and coordination of oil supplies.

The formulation of oil policy was Britains strategic requirements. British Govt. wanted to control the Mesopotamian oil-fields.²

Britains basic aims were, the maintenance of her paramount

2. Ibid, P. 9.

influence in Mesopotamia and the Gulf states and the upholding of her special commercial interests in Mesopotamia. In short, strategic, commercial and balance of power considerations were basic components of the British Government attitude towards the Mesopotamian region. The chief diplomatic question involving Britains strategic, political and commercial interests in Mesopotamia was the negotiations over the Baghdad railway. Britain was also interested in constructing ports at Baghdad, Basra and the terminal point on the Persian Gulf. The Baghdad railway was to pass through a region long dominated by British Indian trade, passing important Shiah religious shrines visited each year by increasing thousands of British Indian subjects. Railway company's its ports rights at Baghdad and Basra threatened the long held British monopoly of the steam navigation company were to create considerable difficulties for British oil hopes in the Mosul and Baghdad provinces. Apart from its threatened competition with British transport interests, through provision of a much more direct route to India, the Railway was seen by Britain as a strategic threat.³ Britain had long held supremacy on the shores and waters of the Persian Gulf greatly reduced piracy, slaving and tribal feuding. Britains paramountcy in the Gulf region, which she saw as essential for the defence of her empire, be threatened and superseded. Thus the implications of the Baghdad railway for British interests in Mesopotamia were great. According to the

3. Ibid, p. 10.

compromise any railway beyond Basra to the Gulf must have prior agreements from and be on conditions acceptable to the British Government. British interests were guaranteed equality of treatment on all railways in Asiatic Turkey, while the sole remaining British railway in the region i.e. the Smyrna-Aidin railway.

On river navigation, an Anglo-Turkish navigation commission was established for the Turkish-owned Shatt-el-Arab.⁴ The outlet to the Persian Gulf from the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The commission was to ensure that this key waterway would be better conserved than previously and be open to all nations. The Turco-Persian Frontier protocol of Nov. 1913, annex the border running through the oil bearing territory worked by the Anglo-Persian oil company under its concession from the Persian Govt was settled in such a way that the company lost nothing. Britain had already influence in Kuwait and her agreement of Jan 1899 with the Sheikh, supplemented by the secret agreement of Oct. 1907 securing British control over the Sheikh's land⁵, was designed specifically to prevent the Baghdad railway from reaching the shores of the Persian Gulf except under conditions agreeable to Britain. By the end of 1913 Britain controlled river access and egress between the Gulf and Basra, and she had secured participation in port construction at Baghdad and as the upstream

4. Ibid, P. 11.

5. Ibid, P. 12.

railway terminus of Basra. British prestige and Britains need to maintain her strategic hold on the Persian Gulf region and protect her other interests in Mesopotamia were all seen to be dependent on the Turkish Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf were the key to what really mattered to Britain. Commercial interests, prestige and maintenance of Turkish territorial integrity all played a part in British officials calculations, but in basic analysis what mattered above all else was strategy. The Mesopotamia-Persian Gulf region was a crucial region for British strategical thinking, which underlay not only the complicated Mesopotamian oil negotiations, but also all significant British Government involvement in Turkish affairs.⁶

During the war British policy evolved, not surprisingly, somewhat differently. Britain was involved in fighting in the Middle East for a variety of reasons. These included to protect her routes to India & her interests in Egypt and Mesopotamia, to open up the Dardanelles for supplies to Russia and once that campaign was failing to conduct a successful Mesopotamian campaign, so to regain face in the eyes of her Moslem subjects in India, who had already been stirred up against their British overlord through a call to religious war by the Turks. But the war situation meant that Britain had to integrate strategic objectives with practical considerations. It was wartime pragmatism that

6. Ibid, p. 13.

more than anything else led Britain to abandon her former concern for Turkish Territorial integrity, to agree to Russian claims for Turkish territory and then to join in the paper division of the Ottoman Empire with France and later, other allies. But under the Kykes - Picot Agreement,⁷ Mesopotamia was granted to France not Britain. But by the end of the war, the British Policy makers realised that the giving up the Mesopotamia to France where Britain might have had unlimited oil potential under her own control was a serious error. Therefore the British foreign policy towards Mesopotamia provided a fairly consistent pattern against which British oil policy could evolve. British Policy sought to secure recognition of Britains paramount position in Mesopotamian affairs and sought to uphold British commercial and other interests in the area. Above all, it sought all these things in the interests of the British Empire at large, to which this region was a key.

In Mesopotamia certain areas had for thousand of years been known to contain oil. Springs and surpages, but apart from primitive local uses, there was no developed industry. British interest in the possibility of exploiting Mesopotamian oil commercially had been manifested since the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is a place of oil potential.

7. Ibid, p. 13.

Iran was able to acquire a composite land/air and sea/air capability due to the help of U.S.A. till the reign of Shah and now due to the others. It had forged ahead of Iraq in terms of weapons in land/air confrontation. In terms of sea/air confrontation, Iran was the strongest naval power in the Gulf after the British departure in Dec. 1971. Because of its growing military power Iran started to flex its muscles. As early as April 1969 it unilaterally abrogated the shatt-al-Arab treaty of 1937 and escorted its ships in the disputed waterways, there by daring Iraq to stop them. Iraq did not. In Dec. 1971, on the eve of the British departure, Iran forcibly occupied the three disputed Arab islands-Abu-Musa and the two Tumba.⁸ No Arab state in the Gulf dared to stop Iran. Iran had emerged as the dominant power in the Gulf, but the visions of the Shah were not to be limited to that small area alone. The spiral of arms purchase needed yet more justifications, which were provided in the fourth phase.

During this phase, that began in 1972 and ended with the fall of the Pahlavi dynasty, the Iranian armed forces acquired yet larger amounts of the latest weapons. Not only did the Shah order more and more arms but there seemed to be a competition between arms suppliers to furnish him with what he had asked for and offer him even more. A new set of events provided justifications to the

8. K.R. Singh : The Persian Gulf. (Heritage Publishers, Canberra), P. 38.

Iranian monarchy to demand these arms and also a rationable for the arms suppliers to comply with them.

The year 1971, which ended with the British withdrawal, also witnessed the Bangla Desh war, which once again proved to Iran that it could not rely upon its western allies in case of a regional conflict. Two years later, in Oct. 1973, the Arab-Israeli War was fought; it not only brought home the tactical advantages of newly developed precision-guided munition but also the need to over stock supplies lest the pipeline from suppliers become choked during a war. Hence, there was a mad rush to buy more of every thing lest Iran fall short of supplies during a shooting war. That period also witnessed an intensifications of super power and big powers rivalry in the Arabian sea, projecting an image that Iran was being encircled. The Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971, the Soviet-Iraqi treaty of 1972, the threat of revolt in Baluchistan, the insurgency in Oman and the Soviet presence in the north and in the Arabian sea was used to prove that Iran was being deliberately encircled and that it needed sufficient military power to handle that combined threat.⁹

This period also coincided with the growing energy crisis, and Iran was not only supposed to be an assured supplier of petroleum in the face of a possible Arab oil embargo, but also considered

9. Ibid, P. 39.

to be a potential guardian of the oil lanes and the Gulf oil resources. Iran even used the possibility of Guerrilla attack on tankers in and around the Gulf as an excuse for maintaining full surveillance on vessels in that area. The bagooka attack in the Bab-al-Mandeb by a motor boat on an oil tanker carrying oil (probably Iranian) to Israel was used to prove that point.¹⁰

The threat of radicalism, especially from Oman and the Cuban presence in South Yemen, was also used to explain an Iranian presence not only in Dhofar but throughout the coast of southern Arabia. Nixon administration gave the green light making Iran a store house of modern weapons.

In this response the Iraqi arms buildup has had a checkered history. Iraq had obtained arms from practically all sources including U.S.A. The west is always being interested in searching strategic places in the Arabian sea region to maintain their supremacy and market and also to launch a world wide campaign if necessary.¹¹

The super powers are trying to deposit more and more weapons in these states in return to the oil. Because new-a-days oil has become a important weapon or mean to wage the war and this region is full of this oil, so it is the point of attraction to

10. Ibid. P. 39.

11. Ibid, P. 40.

the countries who are interested in waging war to capture the market and establishing the supremacy. In this regard U.S.S.R. can not remain silent, therefore U.S.S.R. has also interfere in the region through some pacts, treaties, markets and arms supplies, influencing the countries towards him.

C. British Govt. and Control of Sources of
Supply through this Region

Though the outbreak of war meant that the quest for the Mesopotamian oil concession had temporarily to be abandoned, war brought home forcibly to the Government its almost complete dependence on foreign supplies and obliged it to develop a policy and obliged an organisation for ensuring that oil supplies were adequate, both for its wartime activities and for afterwards. Persian Gulf oil became a question of military strategy and post war territorial ambitions. The wartime inter-dependence of strategy and supply thus meant that Persian Gulf oil played an important part in the evolution of British Government oil policy.

The basis of this policy had already been laid, through the Government's purchase of a majority shareholding in the Anglo-Persian oil company. This action, which was intended by the Admiralty to insure the Navy against oil shortages and high prices, did, however, greatly upset two parties with a particular interest in Government oil policy. One of these was the Anglo-Persian Company's great rival, Shell, on behalf of which Sir Samuel protested bitterly. He took a line that if a business was sound there was no difficulty in raising additional capital through public subscription, and that by becoming financially involved in the Anglo-Persian, the Government was itself entering into competition with other commercial companies. Such competition was indeed very different from the free competition the Admiralty publicly declared

it was assisting, because the company enjoying Government financial and diplomatic support would have an unfair advantage.

The other party to which the Government's purchase caused particular upset was the Government of India. When it and the India office heard of the action they were extremely perturbed, fearing additional military responsibilities in defending the Anglo-Persian company's installations from attack. It ~~was~~ should however, pointed out that protection of the oil installations was only one of a number of objectives behind the landing of the Expeditionary force in the Persian Gulf Port of Fao on 6 Nov. 1914. Although before the outbreak of war, Admiral Slade, a Government appointed member of the Company's board of directors, had strongly urged the defence of the Abadan refinery and the Anglo-Persian Company's pipelines, Churchill did not appear to agree. He was content to note on a naval staff memorandum that pressed such a move, that European and Arabian Defence had priority and that Britain could buy her oil from elsewhere. The viceroy and Govt. of India agreed with him. Only the fact that it was expected that Basra would be ~~a~~ gained permanently for the Empire finally persuaded India to support the maintaining of troops at Abadan.

During the early part of the campaign, Mesopotamia was clearly not a major battleground, and oil, whether Persian or Mesopotamian, was not a major factor in planning military strategy. But, despite Churchill's attitude of Sept. 1914, six months later the Admiralty began to increase its pressure on India to defend the

Admiralty began to increase its pressure on India to defend the Persian Gulf oil installations. In addition to its need for marine fuel oil, there was another important reason why the Admiralty wished these installations to be working fully. Britain at this time had a shortage of explosives, and the Admiralty was supporting experiments aimed at distilling toluol, a basic ingredient of explosives, from Persian oil. As it was not until autumn 1915 that it was seen that the cost of extracting toluol from Persian oil was prohibitive and that Borneo oil was far more satisfactory, and as the Persian pipeline had already been damaged by Arab saboteurs, the Admiralty continued to impress on India, the importance of deploying Indian troops to defend the pipeline.

It was the Admiralty that in mid 1915 opposed further troop advances northwards, since this would imply the withdrawal of some troops from along the pipeline, at Ahwaj. The Viceroy, on the other hand, in writing to the king, made it quite clear that this was only an Admiralty fear, and in Oct. 1915 he wrote jubilantly and, as it turned out, somewhat prematurely to the king's Private Secretary that My little show in Mesopotamia is still going strong and I hope that Baghdad will soon be comprised within the British Empire.

Such a triumph was, from some points of view, becoming a necessity, because of the unsatisfactory north west Asian operations. In addition, there were signs that Russia too might be intending to advance to Baghdad from the north. To forestall Russia and among

other reasons, to raise British prestige in the eyes of the Muslim world, it was eventually decided that the British force would advance to Baghdad. The conclusion must be drawn that oil, whether from Persia or from north of Baghdad, played very little part in the considerations. The military movements have taken place of military campaign.

The Mesopotamian military strategy was clearly limited and only secondary, the question arises of whether it played any larger part in the Government's political considerations. These considerations concerned the future of the Gulf Empire which was divided in two blocs : and affected the whole region of the sea.

It may seem that after so many years of hard international struggle to support the claims of British nationals to oil rights in Mesopotamia the British Government had suddenly given up its resolve in the matter. This was hardly the case, for the future of Mesopotamia and the importance of British interests there and in Persia, the Persian Gulf and India were central considerations for Britain in her military involvement in the war. Oil was one aspect of the question. Persian Gulf having special importance as an outlet for the oil supplies of S.E. Asia through Arabian sea in view of Lord Fisher. But Lord Kitchener and Admiral Sir Henry Jackson while feeling that British occupation of Mesopotamia and its hinterland would indeed facilitate the working of minerals in Asia Minor and protect British interests in Persia, saw this as

only one aspect among many. In any event, the scheme met opposition from other members of the war committee and was dropped, partly through fear of French hostility to it in time of war.

The view of Kitchener on the possession of Mesopotamia was not contrary. In view of France's claims to extensive areas of the Ottoman Empire and the areas of the Arabian sea region, following Russia's demand for Basra and the Straits, the British Government began serious investigations into which parts of the Ottoman Empire and the sea region, it, in its own interests, would desire to retain at the end of the war. The northern Mesopotamia between Baghdad and Amadia-zakho was to be divided between Britain and France in such a way that Britain received Kirkuk and French Mosul. The War office held that from military point of view, the principle of inserting a wedge of French territory between any British zone and the Russian caucases would seem in every way desirable. Brigadier General G.M.W. Maddonogh commented on this that it seems to me that we are rather in the position of the hunters who divided up the skin of the bear before they had killed it.¹² The Admiralty had to agree with the last statement but all the same sharply criticised the proposed agreement. Britain and France gave reciprocal assurances to maintain, in their respective regions, each others existing concessions, right and privileges.

12. Marian Kent, Oil and Empire, p. 122 .

The Mesopotamian oil concession was indeed to become a most useful bargaining counter between the two governments in their immediate post-war territorial negotiations.

The Mesopotamian oil continued to be an important background consideration for the British Government and remained so for the rest of the war. Britain's interests in the Mesopotamia and the Arabian sea region has have great importance strategically and Geo-politically. There was a great value of immense oil areas of this whole region that it possess. It was believed that the area from point of view of oil might decide the battle, what France was fighting for was this region. At other hand the Germany was also eager to occupy this region to impose her influence on the eastward nations of British Empire, an important objective of German military operations in the region.¹³

Admiral Slade emphasised the importance of oil to the Admiralty in 31 Oct. 1916 and of securing control of all the oil rights in Mesopotamia (Iraq), Kuwait, Bahrain and Arabia.¹⁴ Late in the war, when the question of defining war aims was coming up for discussion, Slade brought all his ideas together in a long paper entitled 'The Petroleum Situation in the British Empire', which he wrote for the Admiralty on 29 July 1918. In this paper

13. Ibid, p. 125.

14. Ibid, p. 125.

he examined the problems and sources of British oil fuel supplies, and concluded that "it is evident that the power that controls the oil lands of Persia and Mesopotamia will control the source of supply of the majority of the liquid fuel of the future...."¹⁵ Britain must therefore 'at all costs retain hold on the Persian and Mesopotamian oil fields and any other fields which may exist in the British Empire and she must not allow the intrusion in any form of any foreign interests, however much disguised they may be'. He went on to declare that "The interest that is most inimical to British control at the present time is the Royal Dutch Company', with its controlling interest in one of the most important so called British companies'. This company was in intimate relations with -- Germany, and to allow it an interest in Persia and Mesopotamia would be synonymous with assisting Britains enemies.

Slade's paper, which was endorsed strongly by the Admiralty as a useful contribution to both the general discussion of oil fuel sources, and the discussion on war aims, was circulated by Sir Maurice Hankey Secretary to the Imperial War Cabinet. He regarded the retention of the oil-bearing regions in Mesopotamia and Persia in British hands as well as a proper strategic boundary to cover them as a British War Aim.¹⁶ He also recommended that before peace was discussed Britain should obtain possession of all

15. Ibid, p. 10-5.

16. Ibid, p. 125.

the oil-bearing regions in Mesopotamia and Persia, wherever they may be.....' The chief of the Air Staff, Major-General F.H. Sykes endorsed slade's views and recommendations 'with all possible emphasis'. Sykes considered that 'the very existence of the Empire will depend in the first instance upon aerial supremacy'. Slade had shown that Persia and Mesopotamia held the world's largest oil reserves. Thus it is essential that steps shall be taken to monopolise all possible supplies. Further the area in which it is contained must be safeguarded by a very wide belt of territory between it and potential enemies.

Bal four, saw slade's recommendations as representing an entirely imperialistic war aim. This would give Britain most of the oil-bearing regions. The Foreign Secretary Balfour declared that there were passages in slade's memorandum which deal with contentious questions of oil company politics, and thought that slade's open hostility towards the Royal Dutch Shell group led to be read as an exparte statement on behalf of the Anglo-Persian Company. He earlier referred that the oil bearing districts of Mesopotamia and Persia are of very great national importance to Britain.¹⁷

Balfour also declared that the Britain's Chief diplomatic difficulties were created by Sykes which though still remaining as a diplomatic instrument, was historically out of date, and by

17. Ibid, P. 126.

the jealousy of France and Italy. He pointed out also that there was a vital necessity for the British Empire to secure the Mesopotamian settlement which would not endanger our facilities for obtaining oil from this region.

The British Government could not afford to estrange its ally and thus had to secure a mutually acceptable revision of the agreement of Sykes-Picot or any other made in this context. But obviously it was desirable to do so from as strong a position as possible. In addition, the matter was urgent, for there now seemed to be a good chance of making peace with her opponent. It was undertaken also to put Britain in as strong a bargaining position as possible for negotiating peace with Turkey and a reorganisation of the Sykes-Picot Agreement with France. Oil was not specifically mentioned but the succeeding negotiations with France took place, make it plain that it was an important factor in Britain's wish to maintain influence over this region of Arabian sea.

D. British War Time Oil-Administration Problems
in the Region

Despite the Government's pre-war attempt at ensuring national interests by taking over the more than willing Anglo-Persian Oil Company, British Government-Oil Company relations during the War were essentially a matter of British versus foreign interests. War made the problem of finding a general British oil policy more acute, for the dependence of the British Empire on foreign, and particularly on American, oil became more marked and disquieting. It seemed therefore to the British Government that the most suitable way of solving the problem would be to attempt to bring important foreign oil interests under British control. Allied to this question, for it was an important basic factor in any British consideration of inter-company relations at this time, was the old matter of the Mesopotamian oil concession.

It was in the summer of 1915 that the question of amalgamating the companies supplying Britain's oil first arose. In July or earlier, in conjunction with its plans for supplying to the Admiralty a large quantity of Borneo oil, Valuable for toluol extraction, Shell had made an important proposal to the Admiralty. Extracting toluol from crude oil left a large residue (some 98.5%) of by-products to be disposed of in the market, and tankers for transporting the oil to Britain for toluol extraction were acutely short, the Government using those belonging to Shell.¹⁸ The company

18. Marian Kant, *Oil and Empire* (The Mac-Millan Press Ltd., Madras) P. 127.

proposed, therefore, that an amalgamation be arranged with the Burmah oil company, the chief supplier of the Indian Kerosene market, so as to provide the necessary tank storage and refining facilities and a market for the by-products.

The Admiralty, however, together with the foreign office and India thought this proposal merely a pretext for a general extension of shell's activities, in particular over the Persian and Baluchistan markets, and saw in it also a disguised threat to British interests in Mesopotamia. Ever since shell's first approaches to the Government, in 1902, the Admiralty had in fact consistently blocked its applications for oil concessions in Burma, on the grounds of the company's susceptibility to foreign influence, and thies the rejection of its latest proposal was hardly a surprise.¹⁹ A compromise solution was reached by the end of the year, and, though not entirely satisfactory either to shell or to the Admiralty, had at least the merit to the Admiralty of avoiding a shell-Burmah oil company amalgamation.

However, the question had not been settled, only introduced. The basic issue was that of ensuring the British character of the firms supplying Britains oil. In meetings in January 1916 with the two main British companies involved, the Government, as represented by the Foreign office and the Admiralty, sought more detailed views on how an "all-British oil company" might be set

19. Ibid, P. 127.

up. Greenway, for the Anglo-Persian oil company, suggested a purely imperial company with priority in Government contracts and in obtaining concessions in Britain and all her dependencies and spheres of influence, and relieving fiscal protection in return for price control. The shell representatives, samuel and waley Cohen, however, clung to their scheme of an amalgamation with the Burmah oil company. They had put this scheme forward again in December and in mid January, in response to a strongly expressed desire of the British Government' that shell's subsidiary, the Anglo-saxon Petroleum Company, 'might be brought entirely under British control'. Waley Cohen was able to repeat his company's belief (frequently declared since the Government's purchase of a shareholding in the Anglo-Persian) that fiscal protection, through either a subsidy or a protective tariff, was inadvisable and would lead to a conflict of interest with other powers, which is not in the interests of the state.²⁰ He asserted that a purely British oil company could not provide the advantages, particularly that of security of supplies, that were proffered in his scheme. If the British Government would mellow its attitude towards his Dutch Colleagues he was sure they would accept his scheme, which would go on to be a great success.

Later events were to show that this was rather too large a pill for the Government to swallow. The Government was still sus-

20. Ibid, P. 128.

picious of and grudging in any praise it bestowed on the English side of the Royal Dutch-shell group, let alone the Dutch side; also, its guardianship of the Anglo-Persian oil company was too recent for it to be anything but protective of its new dependent which in Feb. 1916, choosing its moment carefully, emitted a *cride cocur*. The company wrote to the Foreign office that during the cold weather its geological staff in Mesopotamia had found favourable indications of oil in the Basra vilayet. The company was not, however, intending to file an application for the area, since in view of the foreign office's letter of 15 November last, the company understood that it would be given the complete oil rights over any portion of the Turkish Empire which may come under British influence. But, as a guide to its present and future exploration work in Mesopotamia for the Admiralty, the company wished to be advised if the above understanding of the position is correct.

However sympathetic the foreign office may have appeared to the Anglo-Persian interests, the latter could hardly have expected a simple, affirmative answer to their query. Their letter was clearly a less than subtle attempt to acquire, as an authority to which they could subsequently appeal, written Government sanction to larger claims than the company had ever been granted. This letter sparked off an inter-departmental correspondence that was to last for three months, and the issue of post-war foreign policy that it raised was to pervade all subsequent Government thinking on relations with the oil companies.

Greenway's letter was indeed instrumental in changing the foreign office's mind-though in the opposite direction to that he ~~know~~ had intended. The foreign office felt that it was important that the company's assumption should at once be controverted, and pointed out to the other departments that the D'Arcy group, interested in Mesopotamian oil through the Turkish Petroleum company, was separate from the Anglo-Persian oil company, and that the D'Arcy group's claim to a monopoly was quite another question.²¹ In any case, neither the group nor the company had any claims recognised by the foreign office to other parts of the Turkish Empire, concerning which, the department considered, other British groups were entitled to careful and probably to preferential consideration.

Sir Edward Grey felt strongly that it was essential that the whole attitude of this Majesty's Government towards the oil question should be reviewed at an early date. There were two main reasons for this view.²² The first was that, apart from the American companies, Shell was Britain's main supplier. Shell also controlled the marketing of the oil produced by the Anglo-Persian and the Burmah companies - Two British, but weak and local, companies. Hence the foreign secretary felt that it was desirable to examine whether the Royal Dutch Shell group can not be brought

21. Ibid, p. 129.

22. Ibid, p. 129.

under British control, by an amalgamation with the Burmah and Anglo-Persian companies, or otherwise. The present moment, he felt, was extremely opportune for pursuing such a development; shell favoured the idea and the government should take advantage of the company's present patriotic and self-sacrificing frame of mind. The pre-war Mesopotamian negotiations afforded an example of the embarrassment which was caused to this department in dealing with a company like the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum company limited which, though British in domicile, is in fact controlled by the Royal Dutch company. Once the war was over, and in order to avoid German economic penetration of the region, concessions should be handled by a British group. But added Grey, Neither the Burmah nor the Anglo-Persian oil company appear to dispose of the economic independence, the areas of supply, or the commercial ability to enable them to fulfil the necessary conditions. Parker's private views on the matter are even more illuminating.²³ As can be seen from a departmental minute he wrote, he held strongly that the foreign office could not allow either the Anglo-Persian or the D'Arcy group an oil monopoly, even in Baghdad and elsewhere. Parker pointed out that Admiral Slade, who is a director of the Anglo-Persian oil company, is unable to see anything but perfection in that company and he contrasted this with the opinion of Lord Inchcape, who said that the best thing we could do would be to get the whole thing taken over, on terms, by the shell and run on sound commercial lines'.²⁴

23. Ibid, P. 130.

24. Ibid, P. 130.

Parker was not wrong, for at this time both the Board of Trade and the Admiralty saw no advantage for British interests in the only sort of amalgamation scheme that the shell interests favoured. Further the Board of trade together with the India office, felt that the Anglo-Persian company had good grounds for claiming priority for oil rights in Mesopotamia, though not in other parts of the Ottoman Empire.

The Admiralty's views are worth quoting in some details. Concerning Greenway's claims, the department declared that it appreciated the importance of giving provisional consideration to the Mesopotamian oil question, and agreed that support of the D'Arcy group in the sphere to which the promised concessions relate should not extend to other territories.....where other British interests have previously been supported. It maintained, more strongly than ever, its 1914 attitude towards the rival companies and did not hesitate to point out the change that had taken place in foreign office thinking since the previous December. The Admiralty stressed that oil fuel is of such vital importance to the British Navy that My Lords are not prepared to trust entirely to the good will and self-interest of commercial companies for the necessary exploitation on which supplies depend. Further the department thought that it does not seem possible that any concessions to H.M. Government which the shareholders interest s in their vast capital would permit the Dutch-shell group to make would be in the slightest degree commensurate with the giving over to them of a privileged position and rights of immense commercial

value in India, Persia and Mesopotamia. The maintenance of a strong independent group in these regions appears to be a cardinal act of policy.

The sort of company reorganisation that would best serve Britain's interests, suggested the Admiralty, would be that combining a closer union of British groups with strengthened Government influence the acquisition of a controlling share in the Burmah oil company by the Indian Government.

Since all the other departments concerned seemed to be taking the opposite line to its own, the foreign office pressed for an interdepartmental conference where the whole matter could be thrashed out. But the Board of trade, into whose area of activity the question of oil company reorganisation fell, preferred that the two main aspects of the matter, of Mesopotamian oil claims and Royal Dutch-Shell reorganisation should be dealt with separately. The foreign office was obliged, therefore, to send an interim reply to the Anglo-Persian oil Company. It informed the company that the Government was not prepared to express unqualified assent in the wide claims advanced in the company's letter, but that the whole question would be considered at a later date when political conditions are altered and more settled. Political conditions meant the arrangements included in the Sykes-Picot Agreement. On that ground alone, even had these been no other reasons, it was necessary that the Anglo-Persian oil company's broad claim be treated with great circumspection. The company, predictably, was not satisfied with the answer it was given but

could obtain nothing firmer. It was on this note that the inter-departmental correspondence on Mesopotamia ended for the time being. Admiralty 20 June 1916, recognised that no settlement of this question, which regard as of the very greatest importance, can be effected until the political situation in that region is more defined. Although separate consideration of the claims of the D' Arcy group had thus temporarily to be set aside, the government continued to examine the possibility of reorganising the oil companies. However, Mesopotamian oil claims could never be completely excluded from these discussions, since Mesopotamia and Persia were fundamental to the Admiralty's attitude towards the rival oil companies.

The Board of Trade considered that a purely British Company or combination could not provide sufficient supplies or facilities to meet the empire's needs. Any effective combination must include the Royal Dutch-Shell, although British control in the capital and management of the new undertaking must be ensured. By this scheme imperial oil company, as a combination of Anglo-Saxon Petroleum and Burmah oil company, emerged.²⁵ which would be 51% British and 49% Royal Dutch. Dominance of the British membership would be ensured through the creation of British voting trust. The Government must decide, not whether something more advantageous could not be drafted, but whether on the whole the scheme.....presents

25. Ibid, p. 131.

greater advantages than the alternative policy of declining to make any arrangement at all, and risking the consequences.

The Admiralty issued an alternative scheme drawn up by Slade. The Admiralty objected that the Board of Trade's scheme neither excluded foreign influence from the new company's policy and management, nor protected the consumer.²⁶ A huge monopoly would be created that the shell interests would dominate. It suggested the formation of a national oil company, through amalgamation of the Anglo-Persian and Buzmah oil companies. Distributing facilities would be provided by reconstituting the British Petroleum Company so as to bring it under British Government control. The Admiralty declared that as a result of such a reorganisation the British Companies would absorb shell, instead of shell in effect absorbing the British companies. The Anglo-Persian oil company would then proceed to develop the Persian, Mesopotamian and other British oilfields and generally make the British Empire and its dependencies self-supporting with regard to oil supplies and distribution. But through the memorandum of 19 October the Admiralty declared its support of the principle of a Buzmah-shell amalgamation on the basis of the Board of Trade's scheme. It warned that any attempt to push the goods of any one company in preference to those of the Anglo-Persian oil company can not, under any circumstances, be tolerated. However, the cabinet committee in its meeting on 1 Nov., approved the Board of Trade's scheme

26. Ibid, P. 132.

and authorised that department to continue its negotiations, these broke down over the question of cancelling the marketing agreement between the Anglo Persian oil company and the Asiatic Petroleum company.

There was one small flurry over the question of an 'all-British oil company' at the end of 1917.²⁷ This was sparked off by Greenway's speech at the annual meeting of the Anglo-Persian oil company on 3 Dec. 1917. This, he said, should be government controlled, like the Anglo-Persian and free from foreign taint of any kind to develop oilfields outside the British Isles and absorb all the existing British oil producing companies. But the government denied the formation of such a company was being considered. In fact the Government was interested in investing a large finance (money) in their company to unduly influence trade connections and seek priority for materials. In May 1918, Government investigations into the question of oil company amalgamation were resumed, along the lines of the Board of Trade's 1916 recommendations.²⁸ These investigations were part of a definite attempt by the Government to evolve a general oil policy.

In 1917 a special organisation had been formed under the direction of Sir Cadman. Until that time each government department had run its own oil affairs; but the wartime pressure of competing claims on a constantly depleted tanker tonnage meant that

27. Ibid, p. 132.

28. Ibid, p. 133.

Co-ordination was becoming essential. These efforts were made ~~co-ordination was becoming~~ to co-ordinate oil matters by reducing and recasting the various existing oil committees and as a result the Petroleum executive was brought into being in December and given advisory powers and powers of executive action.²⁹ But it was found difficult to work satisfactorily without some sort of national policy guide. This was so particularly in relation to the government's attitude to oil companies, British and foreign. It was decided to set up a special committee to consider questions of national policy and reopen the oil company negotiations.

The investigations were undertaken by a committee set up in May 1918 by Walter Long (Colonial Secretary, and Minister incharge of Petroleum Affairs). Meeting under the chairmanship of Lord Harcourt was instructed to enquire into and advise his Majesty's Government on the policy to be followed to ensure adequate supplies of oil for naval, military and industrial purposes. Walter Long pointed out Britains present dependence on the USA for about 80% of her oil supplies³⁰, and the consequent power America would have over Britain if she decided to be unfriendly. The most important factor was the Britains 1917 oil shortage, resulting from enemy submarine action against tankers.³¹

29. Ibid, P. 133.

30. Ibid, P. 134.

31. Ibid, P. 135.

Walter Long advised the committee that the oil situation must be most carefully reviewed and that ways and means must be devised by which we can attain a reasonably self-supporting position for the future. Therefore the committee will find it necessary to consider what steps should be taken to secure control of as much as possible of the world supply of natural petroleum and in this connection it will be important to examine the share which British capital is now taking in the exploitation of oil fields in his Majesty's dominions and in foreign countries, and to consider how far the operations and policy of the Great oil groups are in accord with imperial interests.

The committee examined closely that all British oil holdings in the effort should be evolved by a broad British Policy. It was absolutely vital to the British Empire to get a firm hold of all possible sources of Petroleum supply and the Government would welcome the introduction of any such measures in the dominions as may tend to this end. Production in the Empire was small and unlikely ever to be able to meet the demands of Britains expanding oil technology. An effort was made through the negotiations with the Royal Dutch shell group (the only great oil group) to bring this under British Government control. It seemed already that in acceptable terms the group might be willing to come under British control. In time the negotiations brought about an agreement to transfer the group from Dutch to British Control.

The British Government was very much conscious about shell offer from security point of view, of 51% voting power in the British companies of the group, and willing of control of that company shares.³² British Government policy was working in her interest not for others. Greenway and slade declared that government control of a company was a drawback, as their company had found out; but, if this control was to be retained and British companies reorganised, then they would prefer this to be achieved through a purely British National Oil Company, as the Admiralty had earlier suggested. It is thus not surprising that these negotiations foundered. There could perhaps, have been an accommodation with Royal Dutch interests. Samuel, and Cargil (A director of the Anglo-Persian and Chairman of the Burmah oil Company) were more anxious for a settlement, even on reduced terms, because of the attitude of Greenway and slade to the Royal Dutch-shell Group.

By the end of 1918, therefore, considerable progress had been made towards evolving an oil policy, and it was one in which Mesopotamia was to play a major part.³³ The exigencies of war had brought Mesopotamia much more to the fore, in terms both of military and of political activity than could have been predicted. British Government had tried to rectifying the situation and a national oil policy began to be sought. Even in

32. Ibid, P. 136.

33. Ibid, P. 136.

the early stages of working this out, it seemed undeniable that the twin objectives must be to obtain control over both supplies and suppliers of British oil. The realisation that departmental oil policy committees needed to be streamlined and coordinated led to the setting up of the Petroleum Executive and the Petroleum Imperial policy Committee. Oil policy makers came up with the solution of trying to obtain British control over the Royal Dutch-Shell Group of Companies. Initial efforts at securing this control were unsuccessful, but by Oct-Nov. 1918, with peace imminent, conditions were favourable for a resumed effort.

(E) Arabian Sea as a Part of British Lake

The aim of the British policy in the Arabian sea region was to enforce Britain's authority on India and its surrounding areas, against other European contenders.³⁴ Britain was the only naval power in the world after French defeat in 1805 at Trafalgar. To make her strategy more effective, England spread her naval bases during this century (19th century) from Aden to Bombay.³⁵ The Arabian sea became virtually a British lake and almost every piece of land within it was occupied to prevent the hostile European powers from establishing bases. Upto

34. Basin, S. V.K. Power rivalry in Indian Ocean, S. Chand & Co., Ltd., New Delhi. p. 18.

35. Ibid, p. 18.

World War II Britain continued to be a predominant colonial and military power in most areas of the Arabian sea. It was the period in which it could legitimately be said that Britannia ruled the waves. The presence of British Gunboats anywhere in the Arabian sea had decisive effects both for maintenance of peace and enforcement of policy. No European nation had any interest in that sea surface, nor in the lands adjacent to it.

Both the Dutch and the French lost their main possessions in the Arabian sea, the English on the other hand made extraordinary gains at the cost of their rivals. One development in the 19th century which affected the Arabian sea, the construction of the Suez Canal, only strengthened British hold on the sea. The Mediterranean route to India became a private subway for Britain with her unchallenged supremacy in the Mediterranean and in the Arabian Sea also, with controls at different stages - Gibraltar, Malta, Aden and Bombay.³⁶ The Red sea became an exclusively British sea lane, bolted and barred at both entrances. Aden assumed the importance it possessed during the time of Egyptian and Arabian navigation in the Arabian sea and it may be well said that the Suez Canal became, as events developed, the strongest link in the Chain which bound India to Britain.

36. Ibid, P. 19.

Britain's supremacy which remained unquestioned for long, began to be challenged by Germany. Germany planned to create a navy strong enough to make a conflict on the sea a dangerous proposition for Britain by causing economic paralysis and effective blockades. The Construction of the canal had strategic aspect also. It restored the importance of the traditional Red Sea Route to Europe. That was a famous highway over which practically the entire trade of India with Europe had passed till Vasco Da Gama arrived at calicut and opened the Cape route. With the opening of Canal, India and the Arabian sea became many thousands of miles nearer to the European bases of power and consequently, along with an unprecedented development of trade, it also witnessed more effective control of the Arabian sea routes.

Earlier, the English had no territory on the shores of the Persian Gulf; but since they had almost a monopoly of the maritime commerce in the Gulf and were responsible for the security of navigation, they claimed political supremacy there. The Britain tried to resist by all means in her power the attempt of any other nation to establish itself on the shores of the Gulf. The visit of Lord Curzon to the Gulf in 1903 was meant to demonstrate Britain's political control over it.³⁷ At the time of the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907,

37. A. F. Dodd, A Short History of the British Empire, (J.M. Dent & Sons, London, 1925).

Lord Grey stated that the Russians had acknowledged the British interests in that region of the sea and that these interests were to be maintained by Britain as before.

In the Arabian sea itself there were signs of a change. Since the occupation of Mauritius during the wars of the French Revolution, France had no position in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. French had no bases in the Arabian sea but tried regularly for this aim. British Empire also had got success to hold the Germany out side the Arabian sea till the historical war broken. For this purpose to scape the Arabian sea from the control of contenders, Britain thought essentially on the occupation of Egypt and got this (Egypt) to secure the route and maintain the hold at Arabian sea continuously. Britain had blocked every entrance to Arabian sea through west and east sides. Thus the Britains presence in Egypt was deemed to be vital for her interests. Britain also warned Russia during Russo-Turkish war in 1877 that any attempt to blockade the canal route be regarded by her as a menace to Indian and a grave injury to the commerce of the World. The Canal had become indispensable to the British Empire in the Arabian sea region. Britain declared Egypt appotectorate on 18 Dec. 1914. Thus, the British acquired a full control over the vital Suez route to India through Arabian sea and accomplished her long-cherished aim of complete security of her trade routes passing through the Arabian sea and Indian ocean also.

To safeguard her interests in the region, she considered it essential to maintain a large naval force in Aden, as in other places of strategic importance in the Arabian sea. The British power did fight among other western powers and Indians also to get control of Persian Gulf they had made several fights with Arabs supported by other western powers against to the Britishers in this region. They won victory after victory. British had moved fast enough to give the entire defence ring a cast iron character. All the vantage points in east Africa and South west Asia and southern coast of Indian Ocean had been captured by the British. The new rival, Germans never acquired anything like a menacing stature, after the old rivals were either eliminated or cut to size. When by a master stroke, the British turned the Suez Canal into a British highway, the Indian Ocean became almost a British lake and Arabian sea was a part of that lake. Britain's command of the Ocean and of the Sea was undisputed and now became unchallenged also after the defeat of all rivals in the region. That was just the time for India to become an 'empire' and for the British Crown to acquire the title of 'emperor'.

But just at the opening of 20th century British sea power became challengeable and Japan, Russia, America and Germany entered the naval race and during the W.W. I the German submarines managed to penetrate through the defence rings that Britain had established around the ocean and sea.³⁸ Again

38. M.K. Chopra, India and the Indian Ocean, (Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi) P.58.

there was rivalry started among various powers for positions of control or influence in the Ocean. The lake had been seemed to go away from the control of British and some pieces of land in the sea had been captured by the rivals. The nations who now make a bid to be dominating are more resourceful than Britain who carried out conquests in the past and pursue much wider objectives there.

Italy was also eager to dominate the Indian Ocean, whose Arabian sea was a part and put in her claim for what ever the future may unfold. International rivalry had begun to show and capture the this strategically important ocean bearing a most important trade route and a link for East and West. For this purpose France established herself at Jibuti in the Red sea region, just across Aden. Italy developed the colony of Eritrea and began examining the possibilities of developing a naval base at Massawa.³⁹ She also claimed political interests in the territory of Yemen on the Arabian side of the Red sea, thereby threatening the safety of the vital British centre of Aden. Germany, not through the Atlantic and African coast, wanted to enter into Indian Ocean and Arabian sea but thought the other route which was the Red sea route.

Mediterranean and Red sea both were secured and controlled in any case by Britain, so through this side also she had

39. K.M. Pannikar, India & The Indian Ocean, P. 74.

no chance of getting entry. Therefore from the side of land, she approached to get direct entry into the Persian Gulf. She made a direct rail route connected Berlin with Baghdad and an attempt to outflank the sea.⁴⁰ This rail route would have enabled it to regain the importance it had lost and provided Germany with a safe backdoor entrance into the Arabian sea.

The Mesopotamia valley has been a strategic centre in Asiatic history. It had been the seat of powerful Empires like Ninevah and Babylon and Khalifas of Baghdad who has influenced the sea in the earlier days. Surprisingly the Persian Gulf had been converted into a protected naval area from which the mastery of the sea could be challenged was utterly impossible for a power like Germany whose home land was far away from there. The Turkish Empire was also not in a position to help the German allies to work through it. The attack on Mesopotamia, undertaken accross the sea from bases in Indian could no doubt have been effectively prevented, if the scheme had materialised. But the aggressive action to challenge the mastery of the sea would have been impossible.

Great Britain sailed the seas of the Indian Ocean as an absolute mistress. Her power was overwhelming at every point and no nation could have contested her authority in the slightest degree, but the storms were gathering arounds it. The

40. Ibid, P. 75.

major European nations had acquired their interests in the sea area. Germany was developing schemes for a land route which would give her an independent entry into the Arabian sea. W.W. I eliminated Germany from the Arabian sea. The establishment of the independent state of Iraq considered adequate to threat the Arabian sea from the side of the Persian Gulf.

The acquisition of Abyssinia was also a part of this scheme. It could meet any challenge coming from the sea and from Massawa, a great naval base, the Red sea can be controlled. But at the surrender of Massawa the dream of dominating the Red sea and controlling the Gulf of Aden dis-appeared. France, Italy and Germany had lost their bases and domination of their base had gone in the hands of Britain.⁴¹ But Japan and America grew as a new naval powers and threatened the further British naval activities in the Arabian sea and the Indian Ocean also.⁴² With this development Britain maintained Singapore with all the facilities and barred the entry of outsiders into the Indian Ocean and Arabian sea.⁴³ Britain was legitimately proud of the Singapore that had arisen as a warning and as a threat to anyone who dared to question the supremacy of Britain in the Indian Ocean and its part Arabian sea.

41. Ibid, P. 77.

42. Ibid, p. 77.

43. Ibid, P. 77.

The other development was the creation of a small Royal Indian Navy. After the destruction of the Maratha naval power in 1751. Indians were sailing the seas for the first time in warships but symbolic of the resuscitation of the old forces which had for at least two millenia held the mastery of the sea.⁴⁴ The British Crown assured the people of India that the Royal Navy would protect their shores and that they need not bother themselves about their sea routes. The British policy was to make India and its seas a large prison house guarded on three sides by the British troops. Japan was not interested in north-westward but she was interested in south-east ward in the Indian Ocean. The surrender of the Germans at the Fifth of Forth Meant that the Royal Navy had thereafter no serious rival at sea and that the British Empire could be considered safe against outside attacks. After W.W.I France became an ally, Germany was beaten and Russia lay in chaos, there was a little anxiety lest the United states, Japan too had been a British ally in the War. Britain Naval power had been proved thus superior in the world than others and it was in a position to dominate the world.⁴⁵

In this time it was also believed Japan was interested in the construction of a canal across the Isthmus. Which would

44. Bhasin, V.K. : Super Power Rivalries in the Indian Ocean, P. 24.

45. Ibid, P. 25.

have affected the dominant position of Singapore and given the safe entry into the Ocean. It was all false and rumours only but it was clear that Japan showed interest in a free access to the Ocean.⁴⁶ The European War changed the entire situation in the Indian Waters. The Gate way to the Ocean was attacked from the land side. After a short siege Singapore surrendered and the safety and security of the Ocean, for 150 years a British lake, had vanished at one stroke.⁴⁷ The mastery of the Britain in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian sea had affected after the entry of Japan and America in the Ocean with powerful gesture. Most of the island bases had gone in the enemy hands in the Indian seas. The commander-in-Chief in Indian seas~~xxxx~~ openly confessed that there was nothing to stop Japan at that time from landing any where she pleased on the Indian coast line.

The Japanese battle fleet appeared in the Bay of Bengal in April 1942 and the British Navy was under aerial attack from carrier based planes, but the American fleet forced Japan to withdraw her fleet from the Indian Waters. Though deprived of the fruits of their mastery of the Bay, Japanese submarines began to appear in the Arabian sea and to take a heavy toll of mercantile shipping. Britain reacted with ~~xxx~~ vigour by the

46. Ibid, P. 25.

47. Ibid, P. 26.

occupation of the French islands like Madagascar and the Diego Suarez. Though the line of communication was thus safeguarded, the Arabian sea could not be cleared of Japanese submarines, and the west as well as the east coast of India remained exposed to the depredations of the undersea craft for a considerable time. The British statesmen had never regarded America as a rival on the sea. After 1922, Britain abandoned her 300 years old policy of supremacy on sea and accepted equality with America.⁴⁸ It was also thought that without a capability to command the world's sea routes, the scattered British empire could not be safeguarded.

Britain had either abandoned her policy of self-aggrandisement which she had pursued for several hundred years or to start building ships at a rapid pace to cope with America. The Americans realised that only those nations had acquired power in the past which had powerful navies and commercial marine. Through her naval expansion programme of 1916, she first subdued Germany, the second naval power in the world, and defeated Japan also.⁴⁹ She also had got capability to check the British naval activities in her interest between the two great wars.

48. Ibid, P. 28.

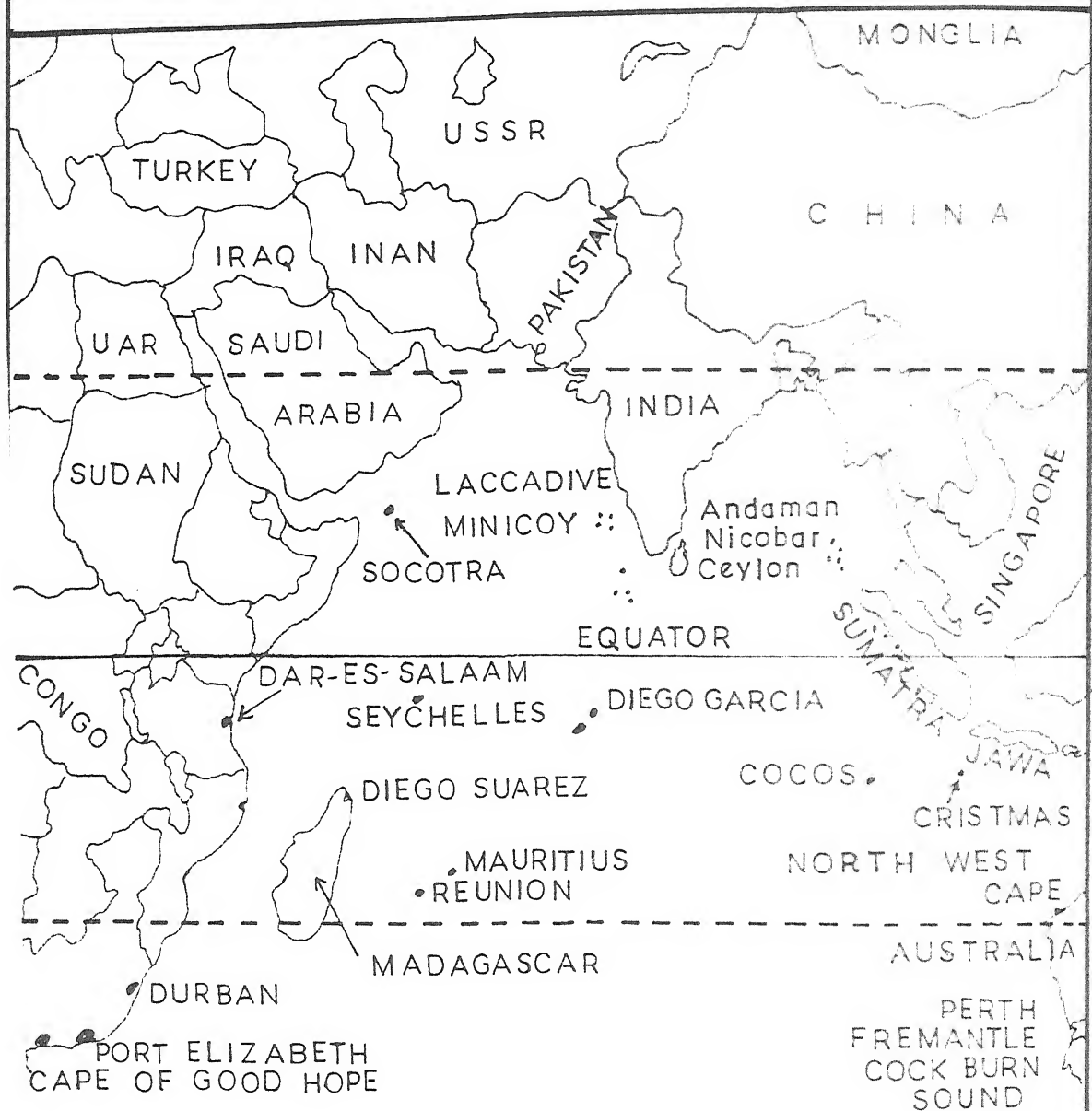
49; Ibid, P. 31.

Oceanic strategy has therefore entered into the consideration of the Indian question with a dramatic suddenness which could not have been foreseen before March 1942. The whole question of Indian and Arabian sea region defence, had, as a result, to be reconsidered, both in the light of history and of recent events. The era of protected sea communications ended for India and the Arabian sea area, and the question of the control of ocean and sea areas surrounding India has again become important.

XXX
CHAPTER IV

Great Power Intervention in the Region
XXX

INDIAN OCEAN REGION



I N D I A N O C E A N

Not to Scale

Strategic Priorities of the Super Powers

The growing interests of the two super powers - The U. S. A. & U.S.S.R. in the Arabian Sea area are recently motivated by a combination of Political and Strategic Considerations. The British withdrawal from the area resulting in a Vacuum in Arabian sea corresponded to the development of long range missile technology by the U.S.A. & U.S.S.R. Political developments and naval technological advances have virtually gone hand-in-hand in making the Arabian sea 'sensitive area' for the super powers. The Soviets entered in the area as successors of the British after their withdrawal from the Indian Ocean region. After the Sino-Soviet rift, this area is strategically viewed more important for super powers. The developments of the Soviet Navy fulfilled a long cherished Russian ambition to be a global Power and as the Indian ocean this area is in Soviet Calculations a strategic region today. It was an area ~~in~~ in which the Soviet Navy took particular interest. The Soviet priority in the area has consequently two considerations: the bid for influence in Persian Gulf region and a counterbalance to the western countries supporting to Pakistan and China by building its forces in area.¹

The U.S.A. entry in this area was also motivated by a desire to succeed the British in the area. The interest, how-

1. R. Gupta, The Indian Ocean, Harnam Publications, P. 48.

ever, was increased after it was noticed that the Soviet Union was active in the area. The U.S.A. desires to counterbalance the Soviet in the area. The Soviets are worried due to A_3 and the Poseidon American missiles which can be targeted almost anywhere in the Asiatic and European Russia from the Indian Ocean. The Russians do not have an advantageous third area which the Americans have in the Indian Ocean region. For this purpose both super powers are making their efforts to develop their relations with the adjacent countries of this area. Both are opposed to the zone of peace concept which has been advocated by the littoral and hinterland countries, and both are wanted the freedom of navigation in the Arabian sea & Persian Gulf region.

The adjacent countries, despite other differences have closed ranks to demand that the Arabian sea should be free from the super power rivalry. But Soviet Union's stand in similarity with U.S.A. stand about the opposing view of peace zone' concept of the region has resulted in a group consisting of United States and the regional countries in the United Nations. Both have the expansionistic designs. This is diplomatically a major set back for the U.S.S.R. as till recently they had received littoral sympathy and support because of the American base at Diego Garcia. Both countries are being criticized in the area by littoral countries. A qualitative new situation in the Arabian sea is being created

by the accelerated militarisation of Pakistan & capturing Afghanistan by both the super powers.

The United States and its Allies in the Arabian Sea

The Arabian sea constitutes a vital sector for Americans strategy in the region. This means that with supporting base in the region, the U.S. could provide air cover in the area from central zone and Arabian sea based her bases to the Israel, and with ballistic missile submarines it could also cover most of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in case of a major nuclear war.²

The recent U.S. interest in the Arabian sea and the increasing emphasis given to Diego Garcia as a forward supporting base has to be viewed in the context of the current American bases picture and alliances pattern. The role of Diego Garcia lies in fulfilling the role of a forward supporting base in an area where the Americans have nothing very substantive. The American withdrawal from Vietnam and the shrinking presence of Britain from the Arabian sea region has strengthened the American belief that they need a peg to hold on to in the area. This thought to be necessary for both offensive and defensive action.

U.S. Policy in the Arabian sea is divided into two categories-general consideration and contingency military planning problems. In the former categorization came in political factors-

2. Ibid, P. 49.

first on the regional plane, foremost among them being the oil issue, the Middle East question and relations with countries of the south Asian sub continent. Other issues which add to the general consideration strategy in the Arabian sea are the recent events in Persian Gulf leading to the loss of local bases, U.S. withdrawal from Iran and political pressure in the Saudi Arabia & Kuwait.

American contingency planning in regard to the Arabian sea is also motivated by factors outside the immediate area, mainly the dangers of another Middle East War and the loss of air base facilities in Greece, Turkey and Italy. This has meant the loss of Eastern Mediterranean strategic capabilities- i.e. the denial of the Eastern Mediterranean to U.S. air power. Given the setbacks to American patterns of deployment, particularly the loss of facilities in the Eastern Mediterranean, in Indo-china, and Thailand; the Arabian sea has increased in value in U.S. strategic planning because, Diego Garcia could provide both naval and air access to much of the region covered by the previous bases, which is established in southern end of Arabian sea by U.S.

Diego Garcia from strategic perspective gives both naval and air access to most of the west Asia. U.S. relations with all countries east of Israel and west of Australia have been subject to the vicissitudes of policy and never even with the friendly states reached either full stability or maturity which

would be conducive to the assumption that the nations are all time or at least long term allies. In other words, American relations north of the equator and from the Mediterranean to the Pacific, except for Israel, have not been near the plane of an organic relationship. According to Alastair Buchan organic relationship is which encompasses trade, politics, values, culture - a relationship which operates at the transnational level rather than just at the plane of Govt.³ There will be a long term stability in relations between two countries. The stakes of policy for the U.S.A. in the region may be such as requiring a transnational relationship.

Neither Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, nor Pakistan, the Islamic bloc in the Arabian sea area, the present allies of the U.S. in the area, have been able to provide more than a basis for conducive relationship on a give and take basis. The limited contact that the US has with the Islamic bloc nations in the Arabian sea area is indicative of this. So is the Islamic ideology which, while binding the Moslem nations of the region together, would for the same reason exclude the U.S. from anything more than a peripheral relationship. It could be argued that the U.S. does not need more than stable allies in the region. This would be substantially true, except that in nearly all the nations of the Islamic bloc, U.S. policy

3. *Ibid.* P. 51

hinges on the deposition of the ruler of the respective state, and consequently, a setback in relations should be anticipated and could easily occur. So U.S. wants to get entry in Arabian sea region to maintain her interests against U.S.S.R. The advantage of sophisticated warfare in which the U.S., dominates is that it will be able in the future to dispense with large manpower forces. Consequently, the military aspects of a bilateral relationship could be substantially reduced should there be well placed and self sustained facilities like Diego Garcia which could have both offensive and defensive functions; that may be masirah, because Diego Garcia could not substitute for a productive foreign policy with a littoral countries. So for this purpose Masirah can be used. The possibility of leasing out this air base to the U.S. can not be ruled out. The Americans have shown interest in the island because of obvious reasons. It is very near the west Asian oil fields and commands the waterway through which 800 million tons of oil pass annually.⁴ It can provide the Americans with an important air base in the Arabian sea and can bring them quite close to the world's most important oil tanker lanes and the biggest oil producing countries. From Masirah, a reconnaissance aircraft can cover most of the Arab world, north-west Africa and south west Asia without refuelling. Even now, the American reconnai-

4. V.K. Bhasin, *Super Power Rivalry in Indian Ocean* (S. Chand & Company, New Delhi), P. 106.

saance planes based in Diego Garcia land at Masirah regularly; in addition to refuelling, the planes remain overnight to enable the crew to take rest. In fact, the U.S. Defence and state department have been exploring the possibility of acquiring permanent military aircraft landing rights on the island of Al Masirah, which is off the Arabian Coast. This military facility can be used in conjunction with the united states, regular air base at Diego Garcia, which lies several thousand miles east of Masirah in the Indian Ocean. To be sure, under a joint agreement with Oman and Britain, the united states has been using the island since 1976 as a staging post for her P-3 intelligence aircraft flying out of Diego Garcia. But the Pentagon desires a continued use of the Strategic island which commands access to the Red sea, the Persian Gulf and the Northern Indian Ocean or Arabian sea area; in fact, the Americans are eager to take over the Masirah air base from the British.⁵ (Easwar Sagar, "Use of Arabian sea base : U.S. Move", The Hindu; 1 Feb. 1977).

During the visit to west Asia in April 1975, the U.K. Defence Secretary, Roy Mason, said in Muscat that the British Government was considering a request by the U.S. to provide base facilities for her ground forces on the Island of Masirah.⁶ In view of the good relations of Masirah with the USA,

5. Ibid, P. 107.

6. Ibid, P. 107.

Foriegn Minister Qais-al-Zawanvi saw no problem for the deal at that time. Even prior to this, an early Jan. 1975, the U.S. and the Omani Government had discussed the use of the airfield by the U.S. Military aircrafts. The American leaders had asked for rights to the occasional use of the Masirah air base and for refuelling facilities for their military aircrafts. In return, Oman was offered military aid. On 19 July 1976, the Foriegn Minister of Masirah announced that the British forces would pull out of Masirah by March 1978.⁷ Britain completed the withdrawal of her forces from the Masirah air base and closed the R.A.F. staging post there on 31 March 1977. Soon after the reports from Washington said that Oman had agreed to America's request for a continued use of the Masirah airport to refuel her Indian Ocean flights Originating from Diego Garcia. The U.S. claimed to have no intention to station Americans in Masirah; interestingly, the former air base is now called an airport, apparently to dispel the apprehensions of the Arabs.

The Arabian & Afro-Asian countries put pressure on the Sultan not to permit any foriegn base in the area, and the Sultan's changed attitude towards foriegn bases was notified in 1977. He made it clear that he would not grant any country base facilities in Masirah after the British forces pulled out. The existing facilities on the island would be used to train

7. Ibid, P. 107.

the Omani airforce personnel.⁸ The Afro-Asian and non-aligned countries welcomed the closure of the Masirah airbase to foreign forces. The U.S., which had suffered a major setback on account of the closure of the Asmara base in Ethiopia, is still anxious to obtain facilities in the strategically placed island of Masirah. The Americans are anxious to have the same close relationship with Oman which they once had with Iran, and it is still believed that the Sultan can not resist for long the tempting U.S. offers in exchange of facilities. Masirah also commands the Northern portion of the defence perimeter which encompasses the north-western portion of the Indian Ocean which has been a priority region both for the Soviets and the Americans.

Bahrain

The other U.S. base in the region is Bahrain, which, till recently, was the only American 'home port'.⁹ In the area and well suited for its original purpose. Earlier it was used by Britain with the mutual agreement to the Bahrain's ruler Sheikh Issa bin Salman al Khalifa, under which Britain was responsible for the defence and foreign affairs of Bahrain to establish peace & stability in the region. Through this Britain would keep open the east bound route via Cyprus, Bahrain, Masirah and

8. Ibid, P. 108.

9. Ibid, P. 110.

Gan. To what extent its role could be enlarged to serve the entire Arabian sea area, given the new sensitivity of the sea area, remains in question. Bahrain is deep inside the Persian Gulf and while it lies sandwiched between Saudi Arabia & Iran, and consequently in the heart of the oil belt, it does not face the Arabian sea nor has it easy access to it. Moreover, the long and narrow characteristic of the Persian Gulf means that ships can easily get bottled up there and it could be possible to cut communications by blocking the straits of Hormuz between Oman and Iran. Therefore it is true that the U.S. had asked for a continuation of Transit facilities after Britain's defence treaty with Britain expired. But such an agreement, according to the Government, did not ~~that~~ imply any military obligations. Since a ship calling at a commercial port did not threaten Bahrain's sovereignty, nor did it mean that the U.S. was establishing her military presence there.

In Oct. 1973 Bahrain threatened to cancel within a week the naval, dock and other facilities given to the U.S., if ¹⁰ Washington continued with its stand against the Arab nations. On America's failure to revise her stand Bahrain asked the U. S. to withdraw her complete naval force from the Island within one year. United States in this reference asked the king Feisal of Saudi Arabia to press Bahrain to withdraw her order.

10. Ibid, P. 110.

The U.S. administration confirmed on 4 Oct. 1974 that it would continue to maintain its naval base at Juffair, a harbour in the Persian Gulf which serves Manama, the capital of Bahrain.¹¹ The Continued presence of the U.S. Navy at this strategically vital point in the Arabian sea area was made possible by Bahrain's decision to withdraw her quite notice issued to Pentagon in Oct. 1973 following the Arab-Israeli war. However, the state Department again confirmed on 30 Sept. 1975 that Bahrain had once again announced that she would like to phase out the U.S. forces during 1977.¹² But it is still possible that Bahrain, after the settlement of Mid-east issue and the ~~President of Middle-east issue~~ and the President pressure from Saudi Arabia, may once again permit the U.S. to go on using the air base. Because the largestships of the U.S. Navy find it difficult to berth and manoeuvre through the narrow straits. The great deficiency of Bahrain, from the American point of view, as that it is subject to the pressure of Middle-East Politics. At present, however, the U.S. has no choice but to expand Diego Garcia, for she has already lost the vital bases of Gan, Asmara, Masirah and Bahrain islands in this Arabian Sea region of the Indian Ocean. Due to the establishment of Masirah : naval base, the necessity of Bahrain may diminish considerably. Her vital needs for hegemony in the region and protection of the trade

11. Ibid, P. 110.

12. Ibid, P. 110.

routes to the west have obliged her to go ahead with the consolidation of her position in Diego Garcia despite vehement opposition from the states of the Arabian sea region.

Simonstown is a modern well equipped naval base on the Atlantic side of the cape of good hope and is available to the United States, as South African Publications point out, for the asking. But whatever naval gains may accrue from the use of Simonstown is more than negated in the Political loss resulting in any dealing in military matters with the South African Government . In recent years United States has refused the use of Simonstown because it is too far south from the crucial area of the Arabian sea. The cape town-Malacca route through the high seas, is also very long and away from the littorals of Arabian sea.¹³

American interest in the Arabian sea to contain the expansion of communism in the Afro-Asian region. With the passage of time, it assumed a variety of dimensions, especially politico-Military.¹⁴ With the increasing interest, their involvement in the region also increased leading to the establishment of a new work of military bases and installations in

13. Rajendra Gupta, The Indian Ocean (Marwah Publications),
P. 54.

14. K.S. Sidhu, The Indian Ocean, Harnam Publication,
P. 92.

the region. In the recent years the Politico-Military involvement of the United States has tremendously increased in the Arabian sea, in the case of Kuwait, where U.S. is helping their oil tanker to go with American flags and escort of flying helicopters & other ships. By 1967, the Americans had set up naval communications centre on Mahe (Seychelles) and tracking & telemetry facilities and radio naval station at Vacoas (Mauritius), which is southern end of Arabian sea. With the aim of keeping the U.S. allies in check, create pressure over the neutral countries and combat national liberation movements¹⁵, the Americans propose to continuously buttress their position in the region through armed occupations in the Arabian sea. The American Defence Department has been reported to urge, time and again, upon the need for a sizable naval presence in West-Asia including stationing of a strong fleet of warships in the Indian Ocean.

The military build up of the United States is rapidly growing in the area in view of the new Political situation. Americans appear to be seriously concerned with the Strategic implications of the increasing political influence of the Soviet Union in the region, especially in the oil rich states and Afghanistan.¹⁶ In case of Afghanistan, the Americans appear to have found a tangible pretext for consolidating their

15. Ibid, P. 93.

16. Ibid, P. 94.

military presence in the Arabian sea region, as it is claimed by William Barnds, expert with the U.S. Foreign Relations committee, that the countries of the Indian Ocean region have expressed the "need to create some military counter-weight to the Soviet Union."¹⁷ America is equally serious about the increasing Soviet Naval presence in the Arabian sea. The Deputy Director of the U.S. Arms control and Disarmament Agency, Mr. O. Zirkhellen believes that there are enough grounds for American warships to be present in the region, regardless of what the Soviet Navy may or may not be doing in that region. They even apprehended that the Soviet Navy would outflank the west in the Arabian sea within a decade, as the Soviets are out flanking NATO in the Mediterranean, unless America reacted. This indicates that the major concern of America is the recent intensification of cold war politics in the region. America began to view the Arabian sea area as a future trouble spot. The American Naval exercises began to gain knowledge of less familiar operating areas, and permit surface units an opportunity to practise their skill in searching for and tracking a sub-merged target. Admiral Zumwalt of the U.S. Navy expressed that our plans for the area are a product of our own interests and our perception of the growing strategic significance of the area. It is also said that the area has become the store of potentialities to produce major shifts in the global power

17. Ibid, P. 94.

balance over the next decade.¹⁸ Americans are determined to have the ability to influence events in that area, and the capability to deploy the military power in the region as essential element of such influence. Americans declared that their interests in the area are directly linked with their interest in Europe and Asia, and maintaining a stable world wide balance of power. America also had no land bridge to the critical Arabian sea Littoral area, he cannot fly to these countries except over the territory of others or along the lengthy air-routes over water. So sea is very useful to them. The Americans envisaged the naval bases to be essential staging area for operations to be conducted in areas remote from national shores. And, as such, they are essential pieces of real estate in wars which have already expanded their threats to include the world. Their usefulness is unherent in geographic location, area, coastal and geological formation, hydrography, natural and industrial resources, Political climate and ultimately indispensibility. To grasp these advantages, including politico-military, the Americans like. Diego Garcia, want to establish other naval bases in the Arabian sea area. The U.S. Government had a definite desire to control political developments in the Arabian sea as well as Indian ocean area and to use them to its own advantage in its confrontation with USSR. US. need for the Gulf market because the oil income of

18. Ibid, P. 95.

the producing states in the Gulf provided a rapidly expanding market for foreign goods and services. Hence the crucial importance of this fastest growing market is for the United States.

The energy crisis and the accompanying problems gave rise to a new concept of U.S. security interest in the Gulf based on economic and commercial rather than geo-strategic needs. It is believed in Washington that the Soviet Union might make a bold attempt to gain control of the space and oil of the Gulf region and thus threaten the survival of the NATO, the independence of Europe, and the basic security of the United States.

American Policy in the Gulf since the W.W. II has evolved in two phases. In the first twenty five years, it was aimed to insulate the Gulf from Soviet influence and to promote a good operating climate for the western oil companies. And for this U.S. military presence in the Gulf, comprising an air base at Dhahran in Saudi Arabia and naval facilities at Jufayr in Bahrain. The Dhahran base was relinquished in 1962 at Saudi request, but the arrangement with Britain in Bahrain continued.

United States favoured creation of regional military alliances to check the possible Soviet advance towards the Gulf. The assistance of the American armed forces to any nation or group of nations in West Asia against armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism.

The United States established strong bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran. The United States strengthened its military presence in the high seas around the Gulf because of giving insurance against any future oil embargo.

The October war provoked the Bahrain Government to ask for the winding up of the American naval base at Jufayr and it is made free in May 1977. Meanwhile, in 1975 Washington made its first arms sales to Oman, and used the occasion to seek Omani permission for the U.S. Military aircraft to use the British operated airbase on the strategic island of Masirah. While Oman issued conflicting statements on the subject, the United States did not deny its interest in commanding access to the island, which could then become the western most link in the arc of American bases stretching from the Philippines in the east to Oman in the west. The chain of American bases was ostensibly designed to protect the routes of oil tankers from the Gulf, but that it could also be employed to construct the independence and sovereignty of the littoral states of the Arabian sea aroused widespread disapprobation in the region.

The U.S. has been keeping a permanent three-warship naval force since 1949, called the middle east Force, based at Bahrain & operating in the Persian Gulf, the Arabian sea, Gulf of Aden, the Red sea and the waters along the eastern coast of Africa and off-shore islands. In the fall of 1979, their number was increased to five. These vessels now called the west

Asian Force with 4 destroyers & frigates, are spread over a vast area in the north-western region of Indian Ocean i.e. Arabian sea, a destroyer and a frigate in the Gulf of Aden, a frigate in Djibouti and a frigate in the Indian Ocean. A¹⁹ sixth warship, a destroyer was to be added in the near future. Significant U.S. Naval deployment in the region started in early 1971. Since the 1973 U.S. Navy task forces led by a major warship visit the region every 3 or 4 months. In the wake of the crisis in Iran, and civil war in the Yemens, the U.S. Navy has further stepped up the deployment of its units. Such Naval deployment is considered necessary by U.S. strategists to counter the growing Soviet presence, to keep the area out of hostile or unfriendly hands, to keep the sealanes open, to maintain political stability in the region and support its allies, friends and pro-west regimes.²⁰

U.S. has also set up an omega Communication Station on Reunion island, tracking and telemetry stations in Mahe (Seychelles) and at Vocoas (Mauritius). It is developing an air base near Nairobi. It has port and airbase facilities in Kenya, Mauritius and Seychelles. A Secret multimillion dollar Communication and Surveillance Station - project Advokaat at Silvermine near Simonstown in South Africa has been set up with NATO assistance to monitor traffic within a range of 5000 nau-

19. IDSA, Oct.-Dec. 1979, Vol. XII, No. 2, P. 177.

20. Ibid, P. 177.

tical miles upto the Arabian sea coast off East Africa and offshore islands, passing on the information to Washington.²¹ U.S. has been also trying to develop a capability for deploying big forces at short notice to fill the hypothetical vacuum following the exit of colonial rulers from the region.

Soviets have warned that such "provocative and sinister" moves would convert the region of Arabian sea into a hotbed of tension and military conflict. Reagan Administration intends to make "Pakistan the central link of the American strategy of defending the Persian Gulf region."²²

The strategic significance of the island of Diego Garcia derives from the fact that it lies at the apex of an iso-scales triangle—the base of which extends from Australia to South Africa and the Gulf. Aircraft placed on this island could carry out surveillance over tanker lanes from the Persian Gulf to the Cape of Good Hope, and maritime routes between the Straits of Malacca and the Arabian and Red seas, eastern Africa and India. It is situated just in the centre of the Indian Ocean — half way between U.S. communication centres in Australia and the far east, and Africa and west Asia.²³

21. Ibid, P. 178.

22. Ibid, P. 178.

23. IDSA, July/September 1979, Vol. XII, No. 1, P. 60.

The island, 1200 miles from the Southern most tip of India, lies mid-way between India and Mauritius. Its distances from some places are as follows :

India-1200, Mauritius-1250, Seychelles-1150, and Maldives-650, Aden-2500, Bahrain-2900, Dar-es-Salam-2350, and Durban-3500.²⁴

Priority of U.K.

The British had initially come to the Indian Ocean region as traders, finding an opportunity to establish their hegemony over the region, they fought a long drawn-war and out manoeuvred their European rivals, including the French in the Arabian sea and two local naval powers, the sidis of Janjira and the Marathas. This paved the way for the conversion of the Arabian sea into a British lake, which they maintained upto 1967 when they themselves decided to withdraw. The British naval hegemony came to an end with the signing of Washington Treaties in 1921 which granted an equal status to the American navy in the Arabian sea.²⁵ The British, however,

24. Ibid, P. 69.

25. K.S. Sidhu, The Indian Ocean, Harnam Publication,
P. 11.

continued their control over the Arabian sea and no power dared challenge their supremacy except Japan which made abortive attempt during II W.W.

The emergence of sovereign nations in the Arabian sea region obviously led to the decline of British interest therein. The loss of the political interest, the British Government found it futile to continue its presence at a heavy cost on their budget. Although the British never withdrew from the region completely yet the super powers felt so seriously concerned with the British decision that they soon began to evolve the concept of power vacuum in the Arabian sea. The idea of power vacuum was projected in view of the fact that the regional communities were not economically and politically sound and stable. British Navy was as a symbol of domination in Asia. As regard the resolution of peace zone in the Arabian sea also, the British response was motivated by a conviction that their security and economy depends largely on the Arabian sea region and the increased Soviet naval movements in the Arabian sea seriously imperil British trade routes across the sea. As late as July 1980, the British Government held that the Arabian sea as well as Indian Ocean can not be insulated from strategic relationship in the rest of the world. The Britain stated that their military facilities in the region, in no sense, present a threat to any littoral state in the region. We can not agree to proposals aimed at actions which

would, in practice, prevent us from fulfilling these responsibilities which include in some cases binding commitments.

The British gave full protection to their interests in the Afro-Asian region by adopting the policy of bilateralism with the united states as well as with the regional states. The British response towards the idea of peacezone in the region till today is complementary to that of the Americans and is dependent on an international agreement which will restrain both the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union. Their dominant interests are traditional and economic. To protect these interests, they have one option, besides the peace zone, that is to collaborate with the united states with which they have broad political, ideological and economic affinities.²⁶

The main aim of the British policy in the Arabian sea region before I W.W. was to enforce Britain's authority on India against other European contenders. To make her strategy in the region more effective, England spread her naval bases during this period from Persian Gulf Coast²⁴ west Indian coast also. The Arabian sea became virtually a British lake and almost every piece of land within it was occupied to prevent the hostile European powers from establishing bases. Upto W. W. II, Britain continued to be a predominant colonial and military power in most areas of the Arabian sea region.

26. Ibid, P. 109.

The Britain made extraordinary gains at the cost of their rivals. Mauritius, the South most colony in the Arabian sea, was wrested by the British from France during the Napoleonic Wars in a joint expedition with South Africa & India. The British had entrenched themselves in the Arabian sea by the early years of 20th century and there was hardly any power to oppose them even beyond the sea. Thus, the shape of Britain's hegemonic strategy in the Arabian sea and beyond had fully emerged by the middle of the 19th century.

Britain's supremacy which remained unquestioned for long, began to be challenged by Germany. Germany planned to create a navy strong enough to make a conflict on the sea a dangerous proposition for Britain. Germans caused a economic paralysis and starvation of Britain by effective blockades but Britain replied it with greater one in their own.²⁷

The English had no territory on the shores of the Persian Gulf but since they had almost a monopoly of the maritime commerce in the Gulf and were responsible for the security of navigation, they claimed political supremacy there. Britain tried to resist by all means in her power, the attempt of any other power to establish itself on the shores of the Gulf. The visit of Lord Curzon to the Gulf in 1903 was meant to demonstrate Britains political control over it. At the

27. V.K. Bhasin, Super Powers Rivalry in the Indian Ocean, S. Chand & Company, New Delhi, P. 20.

time of the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907, Lord Grey stated that the Persian Gulf lay outside the scope of the convention. He added that the Russians had acknowledged the British interests in that region of the Arabian sea and that these interests were to be maintained by Great Britain as before. With the opening of Suez canal, Aden at once leaped into prominence. As Aden is about halfway between Suez and Bombay, it is a strategic station on one of the chief high roads of the world and has a good harbour which was strongly fortified by Britain. Aden occupies a commanding position on the Persian Gulf and looks at the horn of Africa, Britain paid much attention to the Mediterranean and the Arabian sea and guarded the entrance to the Red sea from the east as Gibraltar did from the west. To safeguard her interests in the region, she considered it essential to maintain a large naval force in Aden, as in other places of strategic importance in the Arabian sea.

Britain knew well that the fate of her empire depended entirely on her naval strength. Strong Navy was needed to protect the routes to India and beyond, so she was interested to the establishment of naval bases at Arabian sea region. She wanted political domination there also. The Royal Navy was developed rapidly in order to fulfil their colonial designs in the region. The British Government desired that in case a colony was threatened, it should be protected by the British Navy under the control of the Admiralty and the foreign office. An Act in 1865 authorised the colonial governments to maintain

vessels of war and to raise bodies of volunteers for service on such ships or in Royal Navy reserve. It was thought that without a capability to command the world's sea routes, the scattered British empire could not be safeguarded. Her trade remained her solid interest in the Arabian sea after W.W. I & II. It was said by the side of Britain in 1970 that the stability should be provided in the region where Britain had trading interests. To protect British investments in the region, and to carry out Britains worldwide commitment to safeguard the free world, "The Britain's military presence is absolutely necessary in the region."²⁸ The British presence in the area was to be modest but useful and comparatively cheap.

Britain retained a number of staging post in the Arabian sea even after her decision to withdraw from the East of Suez, apparently to counter the Soviet presence. These ports included the Masirah Island (near Oman in Arabian sea), Bahrain Island (Persian Gulf) and Gan Island (Maladive Island) etc. In this way a new colony was established in the South west region of Indian Ocean, called the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), to construct defence facilities for the British and the Americans. A defence agreement with Mauritius was signed in March 1968 which entitled Britain to the use of the island's port, airfield and communication facilities for six years and despite the planned withdrawal from the Persian Gulf and Arabi-

28. Ibid, P. 22.

an sea, Britain proposed to retain her airfield and staging post at Masirah.²⁹

It is needless to say that it was a legal and political monstrosity on the part of the Government of Britain to have given to these islands the status of BIOT. The whole concept smacks of imperialist thinking. It would be sufficient to say that these islands should have gone to the nearest countries or should have constituted a separate political entity. However, the British wanted these island bases to form an integral part of a line of western defence which started from Europe's Arctic out posts, crossed the Mediterranean, passed along the littoral states of the sea and finally reached the Australia & New Zealand. It is not for nothing acted as a big power in the region in concert with the U.S.A. at a time when the process of liquidation of the British empire had been almost completed. Neither the force of habit nor her suspicious about China's future intentions fully account for England's continued military presence in the Arabian sea area. She has still considerable investment and trade links with the countries of the Arabian sea area to protect, but since her withdrawal she can not afford a strong naval presence in the sea, and collaborates with the U.S. in the ~~sea~~ region.

Her Naval Units still pay visits to the area and participate in the CENTO exercises. The British interests in the

29. Ibid, P. 25.

Arabian sea now coincide with the U.S. complex interests. Thus, despite her reduced presence in the sea, England constitutes a significant part of the Western military power in the region. Because of this joint effort of the west to advance its political and economic interests in the Arabian sea area, the region has become perhaps the most explosive point on the earth surface.

Soviet Strategic Priorities in the Arabian Sea Region

A Nineteenth Century truism held that Seapower would influence land frontiers. The Soviet Union in carrying this nineteenth century dictum into the twentieth has used seapower in the Arabian sea to maintain regional frontier policies, and also in the broader global context of the balance of power. The Soviet Navy in the Arabian sea is viewed as a force both to complement and supplement the large land forces to the north in Central Asia. To many Soviet Strategists, the Arabian sea is the outer frontier for Soviet deployment which begins, in its focal point, in upper Asia.

Specifically, this is seen in Soviet naval deployment in the Arabian sea as being supplemented by increasing bilateralism with the Arabian sea countries or what Oles Smolansky has aptly called "strategic priorities have been reinforced by

Political considerations.³⁰

The Sino-Soviet dispute became a focal issue for stepped up diplomacy by the Soviet Union in the region. This complemented the broader, and earlier, Soviet objective of trying to fill the vacuum that would be created as a result of British withdrawal from the region. In fact, aspects of the Sino-Soviet dispute reinforced Soviet determination to go ahead in the Arabian sea region. The Soviet interest in the Arabian sea as well as Indian Ocean has been on two related planes - the geopolitical, aimed at strengthening links with Arabian sea countries which border China & Naval priorities, related to containing U.S. naval deployment in the Arabian sea.

On a regional plane the Soviet have tried to keep the Political aspects of their bilateral relations with the more important Arabian sea countries apart from their naval or global objectives in the Arabian sea. This is in contrast to Soviet policy in some of the smaller Arabian sea states where political links have been established largely to get base or other facilities.

The Russian move into the Arabian sea was part of the general strategy of filling in where possible the gaps left behind by British imperialism in Asia. This basically historical approach was disrupted by several factors, the most impor-

30. R. Gupta, The Indian Ocean, P. 59.

tant being the rise of China as a communist power opposed to the Soviet Union, there by cutting at the very roots of Soviet appeal to the former colonial states. A crucial region where the Chinese appeal did not erode the Soviet Socialist image was India where there has been an interest competitiveness between the ancient civilizations of the two countries. The Soviets realised this historical cultural competitiveness and soon after relations between China and Soviet Union deteriorated, they made concerted efforts at strengthening it with India, whose own relations with China had been bad after 1960. India became a pivotal factor in Soviet thinking in containing China in South Asia and helped in the establishment of a Soviet Strategic axis with central Asia on one hand and the South Asia and Arabian sea region on the other.³¹

The Soviet dispute with the Chinese has three crucial factors of similarity with the Indian disagreement with China- (a) both the U.S.S.R. and India have fought frontier wars over disputed territory with China, (b) both have a historical record of cultural and political competitiveness, and (c) both states share border with China in the same region of central Asia, Russia in the North and India in South.

Soviet security interests in India are largely oriented in containing China which work in fulfilling Indian security needs. However, unlike the land frontier to the north, Soviet

31. Ibid, P. 62.

interest in the Arabian sea go contrary to Indian objectives, unless there is a repetition of factors like the deployment of the U.S. Naval fleet in the Indian Ocean Bay of Bengal region with which the Arabian sea region already had been ~~must be~~ effected during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971.

The Soviets also fear that China would stake a claim in the Arabian sea. Peking has tried to strengthen its fortifications both for offensive & defensive action in the region by moving into Tibet and maintaining close relations with Pakistan and one of beneficial cordiality with Nepal and Iran. Ultimately, it would appear the Chinese may utilize the Arabian sea for the half circle that they are seeking around the belly of the Soviet Union.

Soviet fears of the Chinese stems from the heavy weapon concentration along the disputed portions of the Sino-Soviet border some of which could be used in the Arabian sea area. The area of heavy Soviet & Chinese weapon concentration lies north of the central Indian Ocean i.e. area of Arabian sea. It covers the region south of Lake Balkhash which forms part of the Kazakh region of the Soviet Union up to the border of Mongolia. On the ~~the~~ east there is similar disputed territory between the two communist nations north of Vladivostok through Khabarovsk and the northern reaches of Manchuria, and from the Amur and Ussuri rivers to the Khrebet Sikhotealin, and north to the Stanovoy Khrebet and Dzhugdzhur Khrebet regions. Mongolia straddles two disputed regions between the Soviet Union

and China. Both these regions are of heavy weapon concentration and both nations have missiles in front of each others' frontiers. In the disputed areas the deployment is largely for the border war in central Asia. But Southwards for the Chinese in Tibet and the Soviets in Turkestan, the Arabian sea comes within normal missile range which can find support, should the need arise, from the heavy deployment now concentrated along the Russian-Chinese and Mongolian-Chinese frontiers. The Soviet range from these areas could be Diego Garcia in below central Indian Ocean and Masirah in northern Indian Ocean i.e. Arabian sea and for Chinese M.R.B.Ms almost anywhere in India.³² Central Asia is within reach of U.S. Missiles (nuclear submarines) operating in the Indian Ocean. The land and sea frontiers face each other directly and in case of a major nuclear war both regions could easily be activated.

India has a pivotal position in the Soviet policy of encircling China, mainly because it offers the advantage of a land frontier and access to a sea frontier. With its long coastline, the Indian sub continent could offer the Soviet access to the northwest or Arabian sea section of the Ocean. Soviet efforts in economic and other assistance is related to this central strategic advantage India offers. Even without access to the western Indian ports and bases, a friendly or even a neutral India is of immense significance to the Soviets.

32. Ibid, P. 63.

From an overall security stand point, the Soviets need India more than the Indians need the Soviet Union.³³

With all indications pointing to a long draw stalemate in Sino-Soviet relation, the Russians have sought to give some sort of permanency to their relations with the Arabian sea countries. Bilateral links have seldom hinged on the availability of bases and related matters - it has been a consequence of political links which encompass the entire gambit of bilateralism, including economic and cultural ties. The Sino-Soviet dispute has made the Russians particularly cautious in policy operations with the important Arabian sea countries. It has become a question of defending their own frontiers with an elaborate system of alliances and pacts in what is geopolitically the same region.

The Soviet Union has paid greater emphasis to developing land-oriented strategic planning in the area bordering the central and northern Indian Ocean or Arabian sea. So a great deal of emphasis was laid to a scheme launched in 1969 and revived in 1972 for an overland route linking the U.S.S.R. with Iran, Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. Naval deployment in this region is to supplement the emphasis laid to developing accessibility through land routes. The Soviet Navy has also been used in regional conflicts either to deter other powers

33. Ibid, P. 64.

from coming in on the other side or to display solidarity with an ally.³⁴

The Soviet Navy had established naval facilities in Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Maurities, Yemen, Aden, Iraq, Kuwait, Iran, India, Pakistan. While it is doubtful whether all the countries mentioned above offer naval facilities for Soviet Union, it is a fact that the Soviets have been actively engaged in a programme of expanding many of its facilities in the host countries, usually in exchange for aid.

The Soviets are on the verge of naval domination. They have set up in recent years permanent mooring buoys and fleet anchorage points near the island of Socotra, east of Aden, in the Dahlak islands in the Red Sea and even in the chagos Archipelago itself where Diego Garcia is located. These fleet anchorage points or berthing stations, described as floating bases are also found in the Arabian sea, south of Seychelles, Mozambique Channel, off Maurities, Madagascar, Cargados islands & elsewhere. According to American sources, the Soviet Union has three major naval operating bases in the Arabian sea : Aden in South Yemen, Umm Qasr in Iraq and in the Dahlak islands in Ethiopia.

In South Yemen, the Soviets are "using Aden as a submarine base and the large airfield built outside the city by the

34. Ibid, P. 65.

British as a base for reconnaissance flights." On the island of Socotra, which dominates the approach to Red Sea (at the mouth of the Gulf of Aden), the Soviets have constructed a naval radio station and ammunition depot.³⁵

The Soviet advisers support a guerilla movement whose aim is to gain control of the sun-baked South Arabian littoral and the oil rich Persian Gulf. In twentieth the South Yemen was one of the most reactionary and anachronistic states in the world. But the Soviet attached greater importance to the geopolitical position of South Yemen than to its ideological character. After the visit of the Yemeni crown prince to Moscow in 1956 that the alliance was developed. Since then the Soviets widened and deepened the Hodeida Harbour on the Red sea. Since the revolution that toppled the Imam, the Soviet assistance has increased and now the Soviet has almost replaced the U.A.R. as the main supplier to the Yemen Republicans.³⁶

Iraqi which aspired to be a major Persian Gulf Power is busy building a modern port at a head of the gulf with Soviet assistance. A Soviet-Iraqi treaty of April 1972 provides that the Soviet Navy can use Umm Qasr at will in return U.S.S.R. will

35. Jawatkar, K.S., Diego Garcia in International Diplomacy, Popular Prakashan Bombay, P. 111.

36. Ibid, P. 111.

strengthen the Iraqi Navy. This port is being expanded with the help of Soviet technicians. Komar and Osa class missile patrol boats measurably reduces Iranian freedom of action in the narrow waters of the Persian Gulf.³⁷ Recently the Soviet nine sweepers based at Basra, Iraq and equiped for intelligence gathering duties, have maintained constant surveillance of the strait of Hormuz which connects the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, an arm of the Arabian sea. Port Umm Qasr is 20 miles from Basra.³⁸

The Soviet Navy has established a base in the Dahlak islands in the Red Sea, 48 kms. off Massawa in the Ethiopia. Soviets attraction of the Dahlak islands is the loss of the use of Berbera in Somalia where they had built storage facilities for fuel and missiles and a communications centre. With the help of Dahlak islands base Soviet Grip became tight on the mouth of the Red sea. The maritime power around the Soviet Union in a strength sufficient to deter outside interference in the internal affairs of Soviet allies like Ethiopia and South Yemen. In Pursuit of this policy. The Soviet Navy has the use of the Gulf port of Umm Qasr in Iraq untill the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war. With these the Soviet Naval access the other ports such as Hodeida (Yemen) and port louis (Mauritius).³⁹

37. Ibid, P. 112.

38. Ibid, P. 112.

39. Ibid, P. 113.

The Arabian sea and the Suez-Red sea approach provide a link between the Far East provinces of the Soviet Union and the Black sea. The existing internal land routes cannot be a substitute for these more economical and convenient sea routes. The primary aim of the Soviets in the Arabian sea today is to reduce the offensive power of the western allies by compelling them to commit far greater forces to the defence of the sea lanes than the Soviet Union need deploy to attack them. Strategic priority, in a view of an Australian Expert Committee given in the area, is the achievement and maintainance of a strategic balance with the united states, extension of the Soviet military and economic influences throughout the world, and containment, as far as possible, of the influence of China.⁴⁰ The reasons for the Soviet presence in the Arabian sea include a desire to reach the Warm Waters, increasing of influence in the area, political containment of China, and pride in power. What particularly warries the Russians is the arrival of U.S. nuclear submarines in the region which can endure longer and operate at greater depths. These missiles can move more silently between the mountain ranges and rifts on the well mapped out Arabian sea floor. Because of such missiles, the targets in the Soviet Union would be well within the range of the submarines operating in the Indian Ocean as well as in the Arabian

40. V.K. Bhasin, Super Power Rivalry in the Indian Ocean, S.Chand & Company, New Delhi, P. 5f

sea. For this reason the Russians are improving their operational military facilities in Asia by stationing a group of self-contained ships for intervention in the Arabian sea. The wider implication of Sino-Soviet dispute the Moscow is in this favour to shield the Arabian sea area against chinese intrusion. The Soviet Navy staged an entry into the Arabian sea in the wake of American build up to defend their political and economic interests in the region and thus it assumed a new role in the perspective of the global strategy which the Soviet Union had evolved to counter act the American Global defence strategy. The major interest of the Soviet Union was to counter the American second strike capability with a view to neutralise it at the event of a general war,⁴¹ and to overcome American pre-dominance in Strategic nuclear capacity.

For this purpose, it appears that the Soviets have opted to by pass Western naval pre-pondrance and to rely on the freedom of the seas in time of peace to protect those naval units which it hopes to maintain permanently within weapon range of western strike units. A Swiss News Paper writes that the growing Soviet naval presence in the Arabian sea is probably less directed towards China than towards the interruption & control over the provision of flow of oil products and other

41. K.S. Sidhu, The Indian Ocean, Harnam Prakashan, New Delhi, P. 102.

raw materials to Japan and Europe.⁴² In pursuit of these interests, the Soviets have been developing repair & maintenance facilities and expanding contacts and friendship with the nations of the region and establishing trade relations,⁴³ aims at providing aid, military as well as economic, to the weak and backward nations of the region and security of the Indian ocean area as a whole. Soviet Union is also interested in launching her space programme in the region to counter the Americans space programme. The Soviets eager to establish an impressive deterrent to any sudden aggression against the Soviet Union and its allies. This area is a major energy source to the super powers and their allies also. U.S.S.R. continued to increase their naval potential in the region and desires to become the successor of the British in Asia. The Soviet policy in this region is based on the following facts:

1. to defend their territory from the American SLEM,⁴⁴ operating in the Arabian sea area.
2. to keep the Arabian sea open for their maritime activities so essential for their economic survival.
3. to protect the regional countries from the American intervention to achieve their political aims by

42. Ibid, P. 103.

43. Ibid, P. 103.

44. Ibid, P. 106.

threatening to do the same.⁴⁵

4. to threaten the western supply routes for the transportation of oil and other minerals, particularly during emergency.
5. to exploit the Arabian sea resources especially food, minerals and oil for themselves.
6. to counter-act the ever-expanding military bases of America in the Arabian sea forming a strategic triangle from semons town in South Africa, via Bahrain and Djibouti in the Persian Gulf zone to the main base in the cockburn sound on the western coast of Australia.⁴⁶
7. To challenge the American global supremacy.⁴⁷

Recent political crisis of Iran, the Iran-Iraq war, Soviet thrust into Afghanistan and American decision to increase arms supply to their friends and allies in the Arabian sea area, have further complicated the regional environment & impress the super powers towards the Arabian sea.

However, neither for the united states nor the Soviet Union, is the Arabian sea a vital region, and while the Soviet Union could have claim to be a regional nation, the United states can not, just as it has been difficult for the Soviets

45. Ibid, P. 106.

46. Ibid, P.106.

47. Ibid, P. 106.

to justify involvement in the western hemisphere. This is realistic in the regional context. The picture changes when it comes to the question of global deployment and both the Americans and the Russians operating as super powers in the Arabian sea. The emphasis, strategy, and deployment here moves to a different plane.

The Soviets have been aware that U.S. naval weapons could be easily targeted from the Indian Ocean and this area of Arabian sea of Indian Ocean can also be used by U states for this purpose to the Asian portion of their territory and partially to the European sector. In fact, it would appear that Polaris units operating in the Arabian sea is second only to the Eastern Mediterranean in terms to target coverage of Soviet territory.⁴⁸ It was this factor and development of the polaris a_2 and a_3 and their possible use in the Area (the A_3 used from the Arabian sea could attack the areas as far north as Leningrad and all the main industrial areas from the Ukraine to the Kuzbas⁴⁹, that made the Russians set up. They felt that with an American presence in the Arabian sea they had become vulnerable from a region which was very close to their shores and they had no area of the same nature from which to threaten the U.S.

48. R. Gupta, The Indian Ocean, Marwah Publications, P. 65.

49. Ibid, P. 65.

The Soviet naval priority in the Arabian sea was related to the deployment of U.S. ballistic-missile submarines is a conclusion that has been reached independently by Smolansky, Jukes and Mc Gwire though there are a number of naval experts who see American build up in response to Soviet deployment as a measure to counter increased Soviet presence in the Arabian sea after the British withdrawal, with the deployment of A_3 in Sept. 1964, the Soviets began to seriously look at their own position vis-a-vis the apparent superiority of the Americans, particularly in what was a very sensitive region for them. The warning concerning the Indian Ocean would be dire, because by entering it no Targets would be afforded for the Soviet Navy in any sense sufficient to counterbalance Soviet targets made vulnerable through penetration of the Arabian sea by American missile submarines.

Smolansky suggests that western actions have been a major consideration impelling the establishment of a Soviet naval presence in the area. The Soviets appear to be too acutely aware of two factors in relation to the Arabian sea as well as Indian Ocean. The first, the Arabian sea lies in the proximity of Asiatic Russia and is a connecting waterway from their European coast to the Soviet-Pacific region, the second, American penetration into the Arabian sea exposes them in a vulnerable manner which they can not offset with the prevailing deployments in the Atlantic and the Pacific which gives both sides the same advantages and disadvantages. The only manner in which

the Soviets could counterbalance the American presence in the Indian Ocean and Arabian sea is by penetrating the western hemisphere, which would expose the U.S. to attack from Soviet ballistic submarines in the same way as the Soviet Union is at present threatened by American missiles from the Indian Ocean region. Till then, the United States with a deployment in the Indian Ocean, clearly has the Russians in a tight spot.⁵⁰

Considering these factors the Arabian sea is likely to be a high priority area for the Soviet Union and one which will grow in importance both in the regional context where it is related to the land frontiers of central Asia and as part of overall global naval strategy. There is deep rooted Soviet suspicion that the competition on the sea with the United State may at sometime get linked with the conflict on land with China. A very substantive part of the Soviet effort is in seeing that either this does not happen or if it does, they are not caught in a weak position in the Arabian sea.

The soviet union is seeking to establish a limited naval presence in the region primarily as a symbol of its global power and political influence, to support friendly radical regimes, and counter U.S. & Chinese moves in the area. Signs of significant Soviet interest and naval activity were noticed in early 1968. The Soviet Navy is sustaining a squadron in the

50. Ibid, P. 68.

area. Signs of Significant Soviet interest and naval activity were noticed in early 1968. The Soviet Navy is sustaining a squadron in the north west region of the Indian Ocean i.e. Arabian sea. The Soviets have no military base or facility in the region. The Soviet Navy has, however, laid mooring buoys and anchorages in international waters in the off Mauritius, near the Seychelles group and in the Arabian sea, which poses a major logistical problem to the Soviet Navy because of lack of reliable, adequate and secure shore based support facilities.⁵¹

U.S.S.R. has a stake in preventing the appearance of a strategic threat to it from the Southern direction. It is no secret that dozens of planes based on American aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf region have a widerange of operation and can carry nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union is interested in the safety of sea routes passing through the Arabian sea areas because they not only link the U.S.S.R. with the littoral states but also the year round sea route linking the European part of the U.S.S.R. with its far Eastern ports. The Soviets stressed that the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace required the dismantling of all the Military bases in that area of Arabian sea & Bay of Bengal also.

To counterbalance the Soviet Union a Possible construction of a Chinese military base near Karachi appeared recently

51. IDSA, Oct.-Dec. 79, Vol. XII, No. 2, P. 179.

in the press. U.S.A. President Ford claimed that a missile handling facility was being constructed at Berbera which could threaten U.S. ships and planes in the region. Russians had already three major bases in the region-at Berbera, Umm & Wasr. (Iraq) and Aden.⁵²

Signs of Significant Soviet interest and naval activity in the Arabian sea were noticed in early 1969. A five warship-squadron led by Cruiser (Dimitri Poghar sky 19200 tons) sailed into Madras on 28 March 1968 and later visited some Afro-Asian ports in the north-western region of the Indian Ocean i.e. Arabian sea. This was followed by a two squadron cruise in 1969 in the region. Since then the Soviet Navy had been sending out a squadron comprising upto 6 vessels from its pacific fleet based at Vladivostok to friendly Afro-Asian Countries on flag - showing missions or good will visits. Some of the Soviet ships are engaged in fishing operations and hydrographic surveys. Some of them keep track of nuclear-powered U.S. Polaris & Poseidon submarines prowling around the world with their loads of ICBMs and keep vigil on the navies of the West. In 1973 & 74, the Soviet Navy assisted in clearing & Salvage operations in the Gulf of Suez. The Arabian sea region is the main link

52. International Affairs 8, 1981, P. 44.

between the Soviet Far East & European Russia. A large number of Soviet warships were sent into the Arabian sea in the time of West Asian conflict in 1973.⁵³ Super power Diplomacy in the Indo-Pak Crisis, P. 21, by J.Mc.Connel Jand A.M. Kelly.

"Soviet Navy has laid mooring buoys or anchorages over a wide area of the coastal periphery of the Indian Ocean or near islands in international waters especially in the western region. The berthing stations could provide rendezvous points for Soviet Vessels and auxiliaries operating in the area and could be used for replenishment and repair purposes - which pose a major logistical problem to the Soviet Navy because of lack of reliable and secure shore-based support facilities."⁵⁴ Indian Ocean & threat to the west London 75 Page 55 by Pattic wall.

Even after the reopening of the Suez Canal, the Soviet Union is keeping its naval deployment in the Arabian sea in low key, dispelling U.S. apprehensions that the Soviets would boost their naval activity in the region. Both the super powers are more or less equally benefitted. The Soviet Union has a significant sea-based intervention capability in the Arabianx sea, and what is more significant that Western powers and their allies are not in the position to control most of the ingress & egress points to and out of the Arabian sea alone.

53. J.Mc. Connel & A.M.Kelley, Super Power Diplomacy in the Indo-Pak Crisis, P. 21.

54. Pattic Wall, Indian Ocean & Threat to the West, London, 75.

Strategic Priority of Japan in the Sea

Japan is a power which can play a significant role in the Politics of the Arabian sea. It has vital Economic stakes in the area and is capable of projecting a naval image to protect them. Several littoral states and all the big powers can not forget those crucial days during the II W.W. when Japan established its naval supremacy over the western Pacific Ocean, and dominated the far East and South-East Asia. The Post War economic reconstruction of Japan and major advances made by it in the technological field have once again projected that country as a potential big power whose policies can affect the Arabian sea as well as the whole Indian Ocean area.

Japan has vital stakes in keeping its sea-lanes open. It depends upon foreign trade for its economic and its national survival. Japan's is a very important maritime power. It does not depend upon foreign shipping for its maritime trade but operates the second largest maritime fleet in the world. Great Britain and Norway follow Japan. Japan's 'maritime position is also strengthened by the fact that it is the most important ship-building nation in the world. In 1969, Japan constructed 432 ships,⁵⁵ with 15.6 million ton dead weight. West Germany, the second most important ship-building state with 2.66 million tons and Sweden was third with 1.97 million tons. The

55. opcit. P. 23

repercussions on world power politics of the emergence of Japan as an economically powerful state. After San Francisco Treaty her military budget has already in 1969 gone up from 101.7 billion yen to 484 billion yen, an increase of about five times. Japan's level of defence expenditure in early seventies was already commensurate with her size of population but it was out of line with her enormous production. Kahn, an American authority on Japan, expected that Japan will become a significant military power even at the 1970s level of defence expenditure. Japan's military expenditure has gone up by another five times reaching the level of \$ 10.45 billion in 1981. Japan's present Naval strength is impressive enough. She has 14 submarines, 33 destroyers, 16 frigates, 37 landing craft and 5 large patrol craft.⁵⁶ The naval air arm has 110 combat aircraft and 61 armed helicopters. She has para-military force of 41 large, 47 midium and 76 small patrol craft, 3 new submarines, 8 destroyers, and 2 frigates are to be added to the strength of the Japanese Navy shortly.⁵⁷

Nakasone, the then Defence Minister in 1970 stated that the role of the Japanese "self-defence" forces should also include an ability to protect Japan's trade routes and overseas

56. *op cit.* P. 24.

57. Devendra Kaushik, The Indian Ocean, Vikash Publication, Delhi, P. 58.

investments.⁵⁸

Japan has a vital interest in the Arabian sea area of Indian Ocean. She depends on the Indian Ocean sea lanes as well as Arabian sea lanes for 1/3rd of her overseas trade and the Persian Gulf supplies 90% of the oil required by her economy. The Japanese Navy appeared in the Arabian sea on a flag-showing mission in Sept. 1969 when a squadron of 4 Japanese destroyers visited 12 Pacific and Asian countries in the course of a training cruise and good will tour.⁵⁹

Japan imports all of its crude oil, iron ore, bauxite, nickel, wool and cotton and 90% copper. Oil imports play an important part in Japanese economic strategy. About 91% of Crude oil used in Japan is imported from West Asia through Arabian sea. Thus without the oil from Arabian sea area, the Japanese economy would grind to a halt. Since 1950s it has entered into competition with the established oil firms for the prospecting and production of oil in west Asia. In 1958 Japan obtained oil concessions in the off-shore areas of the neutral zone between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Oil production in these fields started in 1961. The Japanese oil interests have established a firm foothold in West Asia.

58. Derek Davies, *The Challenges of Japan*, Far Eastern Economic review, 2 Jan. 1971, P. 20.

59. Ibid, P. 88.

Japan's oil interests in the area have enabled it to further its economic links in other fields also. Saudi Arabia has asked the Japan to develop its iron resources in the Red sea coast. Japan's trade with west Asian region has also shown a marked rise. But this was affected by the closure of the Suez Canal in . Oil from the Persian Gulf, Iron, Copper and Manganese from India, Cotton, Wheat & wool from India - all vital to Japan's economy and the increasing trade mostly carried in ships flying in Japanese flag, all the se make the Arabian sea area a matter of vital national interest to Japan. Any move by Japan to protect and promote its interests would bring it into clash with local states.

Japan reacted violently to what it considered as the freedom of the high seas. About 30 super-tankers of more than 200000 tons use the strait to carry the Persian Gulf oil to Japan. In other words, more than 90% of Japan's oil supply was threatened. Japan's navy, or the Maritime self-Defence Force, as it is called, was created in 1952 with the help of American naval vessels and maritime aircraft. Since Japan is a maritime nation, it is essential that Japan should strive to safeguard its lines of communication. Navy has an important place in Japanese military strategy. The fourth Defence Programme of Japan for the years 1972-76, which is estimated to cost ¥ 16 billion, would strengthen the Japanese navy still further. It is expected that the Japanese Navy would be Strengthened with the addition of 60 new vessels, mostly destroyers,

submarines and also some new under-sea detection devices and 100 anti-submarine warfare aircraft.⁶⁰

At the moment, Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force is a compact and hard hitting Navy. It has 10 conventional submarines, 27 destroyers, 13 frigates, 20 fast patrol vessels, 10 motor torpedo boats, 4 landing ships, 2 mine-layers, 35 mine-sweepers and several other support vessels. Its coastguard commands 87 patrol vessels, 42 patrol craft, 169 coastal craft, 26 survey vessels and 26 tenders.⁶¹ Except for a few old vessels which were handed over to Japan by the U.S.A. in the earlier period, almost all the naval vessels are new and have been built in Japan. They are equipped with advanced radar, electronic equipments and anti-submarine devices. The Japanese have also acquired modern weapons like the Tartar surface-to-air guided missile and ASROC anti submarine guided missile.

Japan is still searching for a role in the Arabian sea. It has already projected itself in the economic field, but the moment it seeks to project a political or naval presence, it is bound to be confronted with local hostility and international pressure. Japan has been, of late, trying to come closer to the West Asian states like south East Asian States especially in the economic field. There is no overt attempt to develop

60. Ibid, P. 72.

61. Ibid, P. 75.

political or military alignment with local powers, but one can see a new trend in Japan's Arabian sea policy.

Japan is believed to be well on the verge of becoming a nuclear power. In any case, she was already at the beginning of the 1970s a major maritime power. The military value of Japan has long been recognised in the United States and the latter is pursuing a policy calculated to use it. President Nixon has approvingly noted the future role of Japan in Asia and the need for American support to it. Japan will surely want to play a greater role both diplomatically and military in maintaining the balance in Asia. The close U.S. Japanese collaboration in this direction is not expected to come to an end on account of a certain soreness in some quarters in Japan over President Nixon not taking Japan into confidence while opening a dialogue with China.

Japan's image of India is not a favourable one, and despite the loudly proclaimed love for Japan in many political circles in India and their plea for an India-Japan-Australia axis to meet the needs of a fast changing situation in the Arabian sea area. Due to her dreams to integrate the states under her neo-colonial tutelage, India and other states of Arabian sea have reaction to be apprehensive of the emergence of Japan as a formidable military and naval power and her designs to slice off west Asian littoral from the Arabian sea for joining them as appendages to the Pacific Community under

the joint U.S.-Japanese control. The Japanese self-Defence-Force has been officially extended beyond the bounds of the Japanese territories and it has been declared that Japan intended to start patrolling of Ocean-lanes regularly within a thousand-mile radius. Japan's close military alliance with the United States is expected to be further strengthened but the increased role of Japan within the framework of a military and political alliance with the United States can not but result in the growth of the Japanese-American contradictions which have of late become particularly sharp in the field of trade and economic relations.

In West Asia the Japanese monopolists have already succeeded in obtaining off-shore oil concession in Dubai, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar. Kuwait, with the help of Japan, is constructing an oil refinery in Jeddah.⁶² Japan is trying to increase her trade with Arabian sea littoral, so she is wanting to protect her trade and commercial interests in the region from the super power's strategic becoming or emerging as a strong power. In recent years, there has been an increasing public pressure on the Japanese political leaders to play a greater role in the Arabian sea. Self-interests requires Japanese naval presence in this region. Japan's main concern is the safety of her oil imports from the Middle East

and of the 6800 nautical mile long shipping lane which connects her with the Persian Gulf through the Arabian sea and the straits of Malacca.⁶³ She tried to win the goodwill of the oil producing west Asian nations and India itself also. Japan has built a fertilizer plants in Pakistan too and has extended cooperation in many small scale industries.⁶⁴ Japan wants peace and stability in the area. Instability, in her view, stems from an inadequate economic development of the littoral states. Japan believes that the political instability in many littoral states of the region is a real source of insecurity in the Arabian sea, for this accentuate rivalry among the big powers for supremacy in the area. She lent her support to the LUSAKA Declaration of Sept. 1970 which wanted the Arabian sea, limb of Indian Ocean, to be a area of Peace (Zone of Peace). Japan has sympathy for the aspirations of the littoral and hinterland states of the region, for she herself has vital interests at stake in the sea. Throughout Japan's modern history, Russia has been seen as a menacing neighbour, a challenge to the nations security, if not an enemy at war. The traditional negative attitude of the Japanese towards Russia and the outstanding territorial dispute continue to create strain in the Russo-Japanese relations.

The setting up of competitive naval presence in the

63. The Straits times, 20 March, 1971.

64. Ibid, P. 172.

area is a source of deep concern not only to India and other countries in the immediate vicinity but also to Japan. Though her economic interests are mostly depended on south East Asian countries but with the withdrawal of Britain and intervention of Super powers in the area Japan can not ignore her presence to promote trade relations with west Asian countries especially Persian Gulf nations and safety of sea routes for her oil ships use. She is not politically interested in this area but economically interested there, so she is trying to establish relations and doing help financially with Arabian sea littoral states.

Chinese Priority in the Arabian Sea

Chinese priority of this area is to counter the moves directed her the Soviet Union and their allies. China is showing increasing interest in countries in off shore islands- Seychelles and Mauritius-located in the border area of Arabian sea. Chinese activities are directed towards economic aid, relief assistance, commercial relations, military aid in the form of training and military hardware, support to national liberation movements and attempts to counter super powers influence, especially the Soviet Union, wherever possible.

After the exit of the Soviet from Somalia the Chinese are endeavouring to cultivate its relations with Mogadishu. In view of China's pivotal role in the global balance of power,

the U.S.A. feels that it would be to its benefit to encourage Chinese moves to checkmate the growing Soviet influence in the region.

The Chinese interests in the Arabian sea are primarily of political nature. Having long-co-terminous border with the Soviet Union, the Chinese interest in the Arabian sea is to check the growing influence of the latter as it tends to help the Soviet in acquiring a dominant position on the Asian continent and inhibits the Chinese to compete for leadership of the Communist movement in the Gulf-Asian countries. Not that China desires to see the expansion of American domination in the Arabian sea area, they support the American naval presence in the area as it is expected to counter balance the Soviet naval presence with a hope to benefit from this maritime confrontation. Since China can not play its role effectively in the regional and global diplomacy because of the relatively backward navy and the distance of Arabian sea their home ports, they support the American presence purely for limited and temporary political interests.⁶⁵

Super powers contention for hegemony and division of spheres of influence attract the Chinese presence in the region of Arabian sea. But as the political events on the

65. K.S. Sidhu, The Indian Ocean, Harnam Publications, New Delhi, P. 111.

Indian sub-continent at that time gave an edge to the Soviet Union for their support to India against Pakistan. Yet the Chinese wish to achieve their aims and aspirations by expanding their influence in South and South-East Asia which they visualise would take a long time. Chinese view is that there should be no agreement between the great powers for the continuation of tension in the Arabian sea because this helps them to defend themselves against the Soviets and effectively play the pretentious role of a big power.

China can not afford to remain unconcerned with the latest developments in the Arabian sea area which is not very far from her shores and whose waters wash the coasts of many countries friendly to her. Peking would remain interested in the Arabian sea for her security, for protecting her interests as user of that sea, and for preserving and expanding her influence in the friendly countries of the region. But, unlike the Americans and the Russians, the Chinese have no traditional interests in the Arabian sea. They made significant diplomatic and economic moves in the area only after the communists came to power in 1949. These efforts, which include both trade and foreign aid to selected countries like Pakistan, are designed to increase the Chinese influence in the region. Militarily, the Chinese have not ventured out of their own coastal waters, although they have a few ships which are capable of such deployment. To date, the Chinese see little value in naval operations in the Arabian sea. They fully realise

that China can pose no immediate threat either to the American or the Soviet naval power in the Arabian sea. China's navy is rather small and is believed to comprise of Soviet models of the early 1960s. The commander of U.S.A.'s 7th fleet conceded on 6 June 1970 that the presence of Chinese naval units in the area was not substantial and did not pose any threat to the security of the region.⁶⁶

China has no outlet, no port facilities in the Arabian sea. Although the Chinese have friendly relations with some of the Arab nations, their naval capability is still limited; therefore, China is not viewed as a threat to the Arabian sea states. There was no indication of any recent increase in the Chinese naval presence in the Arabian sea. Admiral Burke, Chief of the U.S. naval operations, said in March 1958 that China is incapable of operations in distant waters or engaging in large scale combat with any modern deep water navy.⁶⁷ By world standards, the Chinese navy is not a big one, nor is its efficiency yet upto the mark. In 1971, out of the estimated 40 submarines, only one was a long-range and was equipped with ballistic missile tubes; the rest were conventional medium or short range ones.⁶⁸

66. V.K. Bhasin, *Super Power Rivalry in the Indian Ocean*, S. Chand & Company, Ltd., New Delhi, P. 69.

67. *Ibid*, P. 69.

68. *Ibid*, P. 69.

In fact, the capability of the Chinese Navy has never been seriously tested. It was not actively involved in the Korean War and the planned invasion of taiwan never took part. The qualitative inadequacy of the Chinese Navy becomes immediately evident if one compares it with its potential Naval contenders in the Arabian sea. China may not be having any base or port facilities in the Arabian sea at present but she is not without her naval presence there. But today it is said that China has a missile tracking ship and a missile recovery ship. She is also believed to have installed an elaborate telemetry equipment for monitoring the final phases of the entry of her ICBM which was to be launched across India into the sea for a test flight.⁶⁹

China revealed her new thinking when the official People's Daily announced on 4 June 1970 that China would build a big modern navy in order to meet the Soviet and the U.S. naval threats in the region.⁷⁰ China is essentially a land power, and her military thinking has been land oriented for long. Because of this, a lion's share of the resources available to the armed forces went to the army and the air forces, leaving a very small slice for the navy; this was presumably due to the Sallience of defence over offence in the Chinese strategic thought. The above statement in the Chinese official paper,

69. Ibid, P. 70.

70. Ibid, P. 70.

therefore, highlights the beginning of the Chinese active interest in the Arabian sea.

By 1970, China had emerged as an influential and independent power centre in the global power system apart from the communist bloc. The Sino-Soviet split and the cultural Revolution added new dimensions of China's foreign Policy. Perhaps the most notable trend here was a new element of pragmatism, which meant essentially the emergence of national interests more dominantly than ideology. Consequently, there was perceptible change in Chinese approaches and the Gulf and Arabian sea region was one area in which this was manifested. Almost Simultaneously this region emerged as a distinct area of power conflict in the internal and international spheres. The state system in the region is a conglomeration of developing states, and there are vast differences in the stages of their development, as well as their responses to inter-state relations. Financial prosperity has arisen out of the oil revenues, but has led to the problem of investment and development. This situation was disturbed by the British government's declaration in Jan. 1968,⁷¹ of its intention to withdraw militarily from the region by the end of 1971. This created a power Vacuum and more pressing problems of security in the region.

71. IDSA, Vol. XII, No. 2, Oct.-Dec. 1979, P. 145.

China watched the post 1968 developments in the region with interest but caution. Interest in the region was as much a reflection of its post cultural revolution pragmatic foreign policy as it was the cautious continuation of its phased policy towards the west Asia region initiated in 1955. At first, China's involvement in the region was indirect and chiefly within the framework of its revolutionary anti-colonialist policy. A factor eroding Chinese influence in the Arab East was the Sino-Soviet breach which was reflected to the detriment of China in the Arab Communist parties. So China engineered a shift and paid more attention to the Southern Arabian peninsula, where the revolutionary situation suited China's expectations. At the back of the Chinese mind was the strategic location of the area. Commanding not only the approach to the Red sea, but also abutting the Horn of Africa and contiguous of the Gulf. The primary Chinese objective is the establishment of a solid Chinese presence in the Arabian sea. This will enable China to outflank the USSR as well as the United states and move thousands of miles closer to East Africa. No one believes that the Chinese at present are prepared to run the risk of war in pursuit of this objective, but it is widely believed to be a major part of the Chinese global strategy.⁷²

For supporting Pakistan and working with pro-Chinese

72. *Ibid.* p. 146

politicians, China will strive to establish a strong and eventually dominant presence there. Most of the western analysts to Chinese affairs agree that China has two main objectives in the Arabian sea. The declared ideological objective of achieving world communism; and the tacit national objective of achieving great power status, eventually to defeat the Soviet leadership of the Socialist world and the American leadership of the Imperialist World.

In early June 1974, China warned the world against a Soviet offensive on all the high seas, especially in the Arabian sea region, which Peking claimed, Moscow wanted to control by all means. Through all media accessible to Peking, it has expressed its concern about the increasing Soviet influence in western Asia and the Gulf region. She has vehemently condemned the Soviet naval presence in the Arabian sea and has charged the Soviet Union with adopting a gunboat diplomacy to fulfill the vacuum caused by the withdrawal of the British forces from the East of Suez.⁷³ The Chinese arraign the Russians for having intentions to establish their hegemony from the Black sea to the pacific, including the Mediterranean, the Red sea, Gulf, Arabian sea and Indian Ocean as a whole. It has been a constant theme with China that the bitter global contention between the Soviet Union and the United states for the world's straits will lead to a new World War.

73. *Ibid.* p. 146.

Due to the growing economic power in the region and Soviet attempts to be friend Japan and Manoeuvre her into an anti-Chinese posture, China has decided not to sit tight and be a mere spectator of the creation of naval bases in the Arabian sea both by the Russia and the U. S. A. She has already initiated a programme of naval expansion and shipbuilding in order to participate in the existing struggle in the Arabian sea. China has always looked towards Pakistan for providing her with a base and other facilities in the Arabian sea area. In this reference the Kashgar-Gilgit-Karachi Road also goes in favour of China, for it gives her a direct overland access to the Arabian sea. With the help of this road China would be able to cover the area with due time and strength to counter the super powers confrontation and intervention in the Arabian sea area.⁷⁴

China is extraordinarily keen to enlarge the area of her influence. She has developed close relations with the border countries of Arabian sea like Tanzania and Pakistan. For time to time there have been reports that China is about to test her ICBM, the trajectory of the test weapon being over India to the Arabian sea. This is a clear pointer to China's strategic interest in the Arabian sea and to her plans to secure a viable presence there. China would firmly support the Pakistani people in their just struggle against foreign

74. Ibid. P. 147

aggression and for the defence of their national Sovereignty and Unity. Late Chinese Premier Chou-En-Lai had said, China would keep doing everything for the sake of liberating the Indian sub-continent and the Indian Ocean is also the Arabian sea area from the control of the two super powers.⁷⁵

But, as yet, China's has not acquired the naval strength to affect the super power naval presence in the Arabian sea in any significant way. She has no control over the western sea lanes around the cape of good hope or over the Suez canal. Mao has asserted that, "in order to oppose Imperialist aggression, China must build a powerful Navy." China has no wish to see the Arabian sea dominated by Russia, U.S.A. and India also. All her interests direct China to the Arabian sea as well as the whole of the Indian Ocean. For China, the sea means bulk transport, Cheapness, and freedom of transport. Her presence in the Arabian sea gives her another line of pressure on India and her active interest in West Asia and East Africa depends on access by sea.

These interests of China must be kept in mind while assessing her future role in the Arabian sea. No doubt, China's capacity for direct intervention in the Arabian sea is at present confined to a nuisance support, and the development of an

75. Ibid. p. 147

adequate naval strength to cope with the super powers is a formidable task, indeed. But, the Chinese tenacity and purposiveness in this field should not be underrated. As China's naval power expands, she is likely to strengthen her naval presence in the Arabian sea. She would send more submarines and warships there, partly to contend against big powers - especially the Soviet Union - and partly to carry conviction with her friends, particularly Pakistan. Peking would certainly try to look for port facilities, if not naval bases. It is only a matter of time before China begins to concentrate on maritime expansion in the same way as she set out to dominate the Indians, vietnamese, Burmese and other South East Asians on land frontiers. For the Chinese warships & submarines, Pakistan is requested to provide naval base facilities to station in the Arabian sea, from where they will ply in the remaining Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf more frequently and there is indication of Peking's intention to reinforce its military presence in this area.

The Chinese decision to open up with Kuwait and Iran was primarily aimed at countering soviet pressures on the Gulf through Iraq. As regards the newly declared sovereign states of Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE, the anxiety to attract them was there on either side. China and the Soviet Union were at one in supporting the Iranian view that the affairs of the region should be managed by the littoral states without any foreign interference. Since the U.S.A. had delegated the task of

guarding the region to Iran and agreed to provide arms for this purpose, the formula affected the interests of other extra-regional powers like the USSR and the PRC. Whereas the Soviet Union disapproved of the Iranian armament programme, China supported it as just and understandable, thus going along with the USA towards blocking a possible breakthrough in the region. Even though China failed to get a foothold for itself in the region, it succeeded in building itself as a counterpoise to the Soviet Union.⁷⁶ Simultaneously, it tried to deepen its involvement in the region through other avenues such as its oil resources and rich market.

China's objective in acquiring an interest in the region due to its strategic location was part of the Chinese approach to the W.ANA region where, apart from establishing diplomatic relations with most of the Arab states, China had not made much headway in gaining any influence, if not control, in the area. In the field of trade and aid, the measures of Chinese success, was limited. Even though the trade relations picked up and fairly established, it could not be said that China had acquired any degree of influence or a foothold in any of its trading partners in the Gulf. Among the Gulf states, Iraq was the first to advance towards China and in Arabian sea Coast Pakistan, who has given her the road to come in the region.

76. *Ibid.* p. 147

China's involvement in the Gulf a two-way process could be deciphered. It was a response to the post 1968 development in the region and after 1971 China became more active in cultivating its influence. A parallel development was the emergence of the Gulf as a distinct zone of international rivalry in the Arabian sea & Indian Ocean. Events in the two zones increasingly interacted with each-other. The situation in the Gulf-Arabian sea area was fluid as there was a scramble between the Superpowers for influence, not only in this area but also in the whole Indian Ocean. In the overall strategic scenario, there was an interaction between the national interests of the region and extra-regional states. Among the later group, besides the two superpowers, China and India were also interested powers. China made a deliberate bid to establish itself as a possible object of counterbalance, and it had to reckon with India as well.

China's strategic interests in the Gulf region became more pronounced in the wake of the developments in the sub-continent through 1971. In the new power balance in South Asia, India emerged as a dominant actor, and the Soviet Union sustained that position. Almost at the same time, Iran acquired predominance in the Gulf, and it enjoyed the blessings of the U.S. Historically, there was a strategic interdependence between the Gulf region and South Asia. Both of the big powers are busy to grow and develop their relations and involvements

with different types of agreement and establishment in the region; this shows their's willingness to flourish their influence in the area and attract the littorals to come with them. This game played by the super powers in the area is mainly aimed to establish superiority and maintain their obligations due to the littorals of the area. So China is worried of growing influence of super powers in the area and trying to support to the maintainance of security in the region by all the littoral states without.

China's new policy dimensions in the Gulf and Arabian sea region are in line as a revolutionary power, China has global interests which it actually pursues. Chinese "global strategy is to unite all those who can be united against the two super powers which, China believes, are imperialists of different hues." For the implementation of her this strategy in the Arabian sea area where China would like the littoral states to individually and severally ask the two super powers to leave the area.⁷⁷ But China was at the same time asking the Americans not to quit this region on the plea that the Soviet Union would fill the Vacuum.⁷⁸

China had sought the permission of East African countries to set up tracking stations to launch its first ICBM in

77. K.S. Jawatkar, *Diego Garcia in International Diplomacy*, Popular Prakashan Bombay, P. 143.

78. *Ibid*, P. 143.

the western region of the Indian Ocean. China has world's third largest navy but confining it to a defensive role of turning China's coastline into a great wall of steel. The China's ships had not ventured outside their own coastal waters according to a HongKong report.

Like the Americans, the Chinese has also her intention to enlarge naval facilities available to her in Pakistan, Southern Yemen and Tanzania gain some credence. In the long run, the Chinese will use their naval power to strengthen their enfluence in the Arabian sea.

The Chinese approach to the Big power rivalries in the Arabian sea and the Persian Gulf is twofold : firstly, it would like the two super powers - the U.S. & the USSR - to quite the area and to that extent it had already supported the U.N. resolution declare the area peace zone. Secondly, it would seek to establish the bilateral relations with the numerous littoral and hinterland states of the Arabian sea region, with a possibility of making regional security arrangement with these states which would put her in an advantageous position vis-a-vis to two super powers.⁷⁹ The Chinese felt that the Soviet help to India was motivated by its desire to encircle China and to fulfil the dreams of the czars in the Arabian sea and the region.

79. Ibid, P. 147.

Infact, China has not only condemned the Soviet naval presence in the Arabian sea but also changed her with pursuing gunboat diplomacy making imperialist attempts at erecting a maritime ----- from Suez to Vladivostok and thereby encircle China." The Chinese felt that the Soviet help to India was motivated by its desire to encircle China and to fulfil the dreams of the Czars in the Arabian sea.

The Sino-Soviet rivalry and antagonism has become a major factor in many areas far away from their tense common borders. The Chinese have launched a multipronged drive to wean countries on the periphery of the Arabian sea to its allies sides. China under her modest military aid programme have supplied arms and trained guerrillas to Pakistan, Persian Gulf, and other Arabian sea littoral. Thus, a survey of the Chinese presence in the area shows a very rapid development of the Chinese influence in the Arabian sea littorals. China have also been able to establish links with several countries like Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Aden and Yemen within a short period.⁸⁰ The Chinese have strengthened their position and established themselves firmly in this area. They have developed very strong and long-lasting links with important countries like Pakistan and Aden which would enable them to operate more freely in the Arabian sea in future.

80. Rajendra Singh, Politics of the Indian Ocean, P. 110.

The Arabian sea area would gradually become more and more important for China for a variety of reasons. It has already developed serious economic interests in several littoral states. China's export potential would develop and it might like to have areas which are comparatively free from international competition which it can exploit.

The growing Chinese oil requirements is another her economic interest in the Arabian sea area, especially in the Arabian sea area, especially in the Persian Gulf region. The Chinese have invested heavily in oil exploration in the mainland after their estrangement with the Soviet Union which was an important source of oil supply for them. But after confrontation between them, Soviet Union have closed the oil supply to China. China can not ignore the need of oil for industrial modernization and for the Navy especially. China's growing merchant marine, which has nearly doubled itself since 1960, would also need more oil. Besides others, only the Persian Gulf oil offers the best possibility in terms of shorter distance and also lesser competition. An agreement on 21 June 1971 was signed with Iraq for developing oil resources and industry.⁸¹ China also come with touch in Iran when Pakistan mediation was possible to her in this region.

The Beijing openly declared support for the policy of

81. Ibid, P. 112.

the Shah of Iran in the Arabian sea and the Persian Gulf after 1977. It was said by Mao in 1953 that "in order to oppose imperialist aggression, we must build a powerful navy."⁸²

Strategic Priority of France

During the Eighteenth Century, France contended with Britain for supremacy in the Arabian sea region. At the end of this prolonged struggle, the British had managed to evict the France from their strategic positions in India and, during the Napoleonic Wars, from Mauritius (called by France, Ile de France) and the Seychelles islands.⁸³ But during the second half of the 19th century, France staged a comeback into the area. Besides the island of Reunion, returned by Britain in 1818, Paris established control over the large island of Madagascar and the Comoro islands, and set up a colony in the Gulf of Tadjoura, naming it the French coast of Somali with its capital in Djibouti.

The French decolonization of Africa was followed, with certain hesitations in the Western Indian Ocean region. Except Mahore, other islands declared independent state and now Mahore

82. Ibid, P. 113.

83. William L. Dowdy & Russel B. Trood, The Indian Ocean, Perspective on a strategic Arena, P. 481.

may become an overseas department of France.

In several of these places Paris has attempted to maintain a political-military foothold. For instance, under an agreement with the newly independent Malagasy Republic, the French were able to maintain an air base and to garrison the strategically important naval base of Diego Suarez. This arrangement continued for over a decade, until 1973, when the French were compelled to withdraw from their facilities following a Change of government in Tananarive. In the strategically important Republic of Djibouti located at the entrance of the Bab-el-Mandeb strait, France has stationed two French infantry regiments and two squadrons of the French air force. The French navy also uses Djibouti's harbor as a naval base.

In other parts of the Indian Ocean region French links are much stronger. The Island of Reunion has been a French overseas department since 1949. France's determination to hold on in the Western Indian Ocean is evident in its continued claim to several small islands.

The key to understanding France's continued presence in and policies towards the Arabian sea region is to be found in Paris's perception of its status as a great power. As such, France claims to have a global role independent of what French leaders like to call the condominium of the two superpowers; "Paris thus finds it quite natural to have a military presence

in the Arabian sea region next only to that of the Soviet Union and the United States. But this presence is not only justified for reasons of national prestige; Paris is able to point to more tangible and pragmatic motives for its Arabian sea involvement.

French Possessions in the western part of this sea require protection. These possessions are located along the sea lanes leading to and from the Suez canal and along the cape route down the east coast of Africa. To protect these sea routes and its sovereign possessions, Paris sees a naval/military establishment as indispensable. Thus in 1974, following the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 and the Arab oil embargo, Paris formally set up a new naval command to extend over the entire Arabian sea and the cape route leading to Indian Ocean.⁸⁴ The operational headquarters of the commander-in-Chief of this naval command is located on one of the larger ships whose base, when not deployed, is the port of Djibouti.

The composition and numbers of the French fleet operating in the region vary a great deal. At any one moment, the French navy may be more powerful than either the Soviet or the American squadrons present in the region.⁸⁵ At times, one of the cleamenceantype attack carriers and four or five other

84. Ibid, P. 482.

85. Ibid, P. 482.

surface combat vessels, as well as an unidentified number of submarines, are to be found in those waters. The vessels are routinely rotated between the four naval commands of the French Navy, two of them in home waters, one in the Pacific, and one in the Indian Ocean.

In 1974, when the new naval commands was established, about 80 percent of French oil supplies came from the Persian Gulf states. Since then this dependence on gulf oil has declined but it is still considerable. Even so, supply lines remain very long since most of the oil passes through the Mozambique channel and around the cape.

France stations military units in many of its former African colonies. Thus, Senegal, the Central African Republic, Gabon, the Ivory Coast and the Djibouti, all have some French military forces on their soil. In a highly unstable region of Africa, these forces are intended in part to maintain often precarious levels of internal stability. The French naval units established at the attached coastal area of the Arabian Sea remained very much conscious about activities committed in the region. In France, responding, albeit reluctantly, to such situations is not only seen as a responsibility born of a previous colonial relationship, but is also perceived to be in Paris's best interests given its considerable economic investments in the region.

A sense of the importance France attaches to these interests and to its role in the region can be gained by appreciating that long before the idea of a Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) was conceived in Washington, France had created its own forced Intervention. Consisting of airborne and airportable motorized units, the force can be employed in practically any part of the world but is intended essentially for use in Africa and in the Indian Ocean and Arabian sea region.⁸⁶ The Socialist Government of Francois Mitterand has confirmed that French forces will remain in Africa and that those units designated for use in emergencies will be maintained at a high level of readiness.⁸⁷ The outbreak of fighting between rival groups in Chad in 1983, in which one side was reportedly backed by Libya, provided a test of Mitterand's determination in this regard. On that occasion French forces did go to the aid of the Chadian Government but not, it seems, without considerable encouragement from Washington. As regards with the naval establishment in the Indian Ocean and near at the future in the Arabian sea, the close collaboration practiced by the British and American Governments Generally does not extend to the French. However, the three navies do cooperate in keeping a watchful eye on Soviet naval activities.

86. Ibid, P. 484.

87. Ibid, P. 484.

French naval deployments in the Indian Ocean region have been hampered by the loss of the excellent base at Diego Suarez. Since the situation on Mahore is somewhat uncertain and the harbour facilities on Reunion Island are unsatisfactory naval base in the waters around Arabian sea and also around the Mozambique channel. Besides military aid, France provides considerable economic assistance to its former colonies.⁸⁸

France is more conscious of the potential of a cultural imperialism than most other nations. Both Mauritius and the Seychelles are francophone; the majority of their people speak a creolized French. English is the official language of the two countries but the lingua-franca is French-creole, making the people open and receptive to French cultural influences. By the dispatch of teachers and books, by radio and by promoting French tourism Paris has undertaken a cultural reconquest of an area that it lost politically to Britain 150 years ago.⁸⁹

The Principal French interests in the Arabian sea and the Mediterranean were her trade routes and her colonies on the adjoining coast of Africa. The former were vital for French because they radiated from Marseilles to all important zones of the World. The African colonies were also of utmost

88. Ibid, P. 485.

89. Ibid, P. 485.

importance because they were the source of manpower in which France was deficient. But France had found it difficult to meet the British threat to her communications and had thought of developing a capital ship Navy. The state of her finances did not permit it and she had to concentrate on well-armed fast cruisers, sea-going torpedo boats and submarines. She also built large cruisers and submarines for commerce destroying operations outside the Mediterranean supported by airforce. In order to counterbalance the superior might of the British fleet, France planned to have a superior air force. Such a force could control a large area near her own coasts and could protect her lines of communication within the radius of the action of her aircrafts. An airforce had special importance for France whose sources of supply were nearby British bases and trade routes and supplies mostly oil passed through the Arabian sea and Indian ocean.

The French naval programme threatened her communications with India and the safety of the whole British Empire. France refused British appeal about naval parity with Italy and proposed to ensure her imperial communications by an expansion not only of light craft, aircraft and bases but also of submarines. According to the French the submarine was the only weapon which could be used with some success against those battleship which the powerful navies possessed.⁹⁰

90. V.K. Bhasin, Super Power Rivalry in Indian Ocean, P. 34.

French founded Djibouti in 1888. It is one of the finest natural harbours in the Indian Ocean. It is located at the junction of the Red sea and the Gulf of Aden of the east coast of Africa, it is an important port of call and a coaling station. It is of immense strategic importance, especially when the Suez canal is open. It can be a mighty base in the hands of a strong power to monitor the movements of ships between the Red sea and the Arabian sea region of Indian Ocean. Later, when Djibouti became independent in 1977, the French retained the responsibility of defending it. For this they maintained 10000 troops at Djibouti near where the Gulf of Aden joins the Red sea. After withdraw its forces from the Malagasy, the French decided to establish the island of reunion as the head quarters of French forces in the southern Indian Ocean and watch the Arabian sea activities.⁹¹

Senator Taft estimated that, by the middle of 1975, the French had 2 aircraft carriers, 2 cruisers, 22 destroyers, 52⁹² anti-submarine frigates and corvettes, and 19 attack submarines. France called for the construction of 2 nuclear powered aircraft carriers, 2 helicopter carriers, 30 frigates and corvettes and 20 submarines by 1985. The French would be using these in the Indian Ocean areas to protect their petroleum interests.

91. K.S. Jawatkar, *Diego Garcia in International Politics*, P. 121.

92. *Ibid*, P. 122.

After the Iran-Iraq war brokeout, French President admitted that 5 French mine hunters and minesweepers were sailing to the Indian Ocean to join the 20 ship French fleet already in the area to counter any move to block the strait of Hormuz - the Gulf oil route. According to G.S. Bhargava, the French naval presence in the area is second only to that of the Soviet Union and ahead of the American.⁹³

Creative Crisis Management

As things are today, there is not much hope of a multi-lateral understanding among arms manufacturers and sellers which would promote arms limitations in the Arabian sea region. Therefore, the burden of easing the tension and of halting the deluge of arms rests primarily with the regional powers. They will have to work out a mechanism, independent of the great powers, that would help reduce the use of force as the major bulwork of their security. Arms alone do not always ensure security. While they might offer a form of defence they can not remove the causes of fear. Thus, while recognising the need for arms for regime, systemic, national and regional security, it should not be overlooked that security in its broad context can be achieved through other means.

93. Ibid, P. 123.

One way of promoting effective arms controls is to evolve mechanisms which can operate within the frame work of the U.N., the Non-alignment, the Arab league, or, if need be, specially tailored to meet the requirements of the Arabian sea region. The United Nations, over a number of years, has evolved a mechanism for crisis management which was fairly effective in situation that developed in the Afghanistan, Kashmir and Baghdad. But the U.N. machinery moves slowly because of the constraints of the super power and big power rivalry, especially in the security council.⁹⁴

The SARC, being smaller and also more directly involved with Indian sub-continental affairs, often moves faster and its quiet diplomacy is probably more acceptable to the sub-continental states. Like this the non-alignment movement being broader and also more directly involved with Arabian, Indian and African coastal regions affairs. It also worked for world peace and stability and freedom of nations of the other regions and its diplomacy is more acceptable to the Nations, belongs to it. Over a number of years, the nations have shown a remarkable aptitude for crisis management and even conflict resolution within the regional states, as can be seen by their role in

94. K.R. Singh, *The Persian Gulf*, Heritage Publications, Melbourne, P. 128.

Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq war of 1980, Indo-Pak War of 1965 and 1971 and in other areas also around these African Bay of Bengal, Mediterranean sea etc.

The first time the Arabs made a concerted effort towards crisis management was in 1961 when Iraq under colonel Abdul Karim Qassem, claimed that Kuwait belonged to Iraq.⁹⁶ The claim was made soon after Britain had signed an agreement making Kuwait a sovereign independent state. The agreement, however, included an arrangement whereby Kuwait could, if necessary, seek British military support. The Sheikh of Kuwait, therefore, requested British military intervention. The Iraqi claim had been made on 25 June 1961, the sheikh requested Britain to help Kuwait on 30 June and British troops landed on 1 July.⁹⁷ A small troop of Saudi Arabia also joined them to register an Arab presence as well. Despite Iraqi opposition, Kuwait was made a member of Arab League on 20 July. The next month an arrangement was made under the Arab League collective security Pact, to send Arab troops to Kuwait to replace the British troops stationed there. The sheikh of Kuwait requested that the British troops be removed so that their place might be taken by Arab troops. The Iraqi regime recognised Kuwait on 4 Oct. 1973.⁹⁸ Thus, this first joint

96. Ibid, P. 129.

97. Ibid, P. 129.

98. Ibid, P. 129.

Arab military intervention with a view to interposing Arab presence between hostile Arab states was a good example of crisis management within the Arab world.

The other example is the stationing of the Indian forces in Sri Lanka and Maldivian island. This force was sent to intervene in the Sri Lankan civil war and in the Maldives to crush the coup against the Government of Guyana to help maintain peace and to prevent the outsider possible interference. The process started with the entry of Indian troops in and it was highly criticised by some countries of Arabian sea region. An issue of Kashmir was raised in Non-aligned conference in Belgrad. But this was not taken seriously there. The Simla agreement of 1974 was made between India & Pakistan to solve this critical problem. But with the support of USA and China, Pakistan always violated the conditions of agreement and done unhuman activities in this area against India. Different types of cooperation is given to Pakistan by USA & China to create instability in this west coastal border area of Arabian sea. Peking to Karakoram road was made to smooth the activities also. Terrorists are also trained and armed by Pakistan against India and they attempted criminal activities in India's border Provinces. In this way they wanted to check the India's development peace & stability.

The intervention of Soviets in Afghanistan was also an example in this region. About 1.5 Lakhs of Soviet troops were

stationed in Afghanistan till oct. 1988, to maintain peace and stability there, which was affected by revals. Pakistan, Iran and other big powers were also behind them and inherent them to do this. Revals & their arms were supplied by Pakistan & Iran with the help of USA and China against Soviet and local Government troops to disturb its constitutional shape and size. But long a time awaited by the people of Afghanistan and an agreement was reached there to withdraw the Soviet troops in instalment in a fix time, but warned the revals for their unwilling activities to disturb the peace and try to crush the human character. India supported the Soviet intervention in humanaterean ground being a responsible member of non-aligned movement whose Afghanistan is also a member. This issue of Afghanistan was also raised in UNO by Pakistan and others but strictly opposed by those who don't wish to disturb peace and respect sovereignty of every independent nation.

Although the Arab League, SARC and Non-alignment have functioned as an effective instrument for crisis management. These are be set with problems which delay the process. There are still scope for building a specific peace-keeping mechanism for the Arabian sea region. Efforts are always making in the conferences of these organisations to form some sort of Arabian sea regions security through pacts and agreements between affected nations. It proved to be abortive because of several factors like commitment to non-alignment by these states and

also because of the dominant role that the Iran, Pakistan and some other nations of this region wanted to play in these organisations. The revolution in Iran has removed the Shah but the new regime in Iran is still too unstable and beset with internal problems to take up the task of regional security effectively. Iran-Iraq war, Pakistan's and India's internal problems and Afghanistan's unrest are also affecting factors for Arabian sea regional security. Hence the initiative for creating a mechanism for crisis management really rests with these states of the region. In a way, that makes the task easier because of their links with the non-alignment.

Crisis management mechanisms, to be effective, would need two major inputs, an automatic trigger mechanism for initiating the process, and some form of peace-keeping force, assigned permanently by each member in the Arabian sea regions to be used at the earliest possible occasion. Given the will, it should not be difficult to create a Arabian sea secretariat, with a permanent staff, with which an aggrieved party can register its complaint and plead for action. The commission could start then the process of crisis management either at a low level, or seek the cooperation of all regional powers at the higher level, to initiate the process of mediation, conciliation and arbitration, or if the situation so demands, the commission could suggest the introduction, as a buffer, of the peace keeping force at the request of either of the parties to

the dispute. Indeed, the initiative of sending such troops to Kuwait and Maldives and Srilanka reflects the regional capability to evolve such a mechanism. Moreover, such an inbuilt and effective peace keeping mechanism, and effective peace keeping mechanism, by offering peace and stability, would help a great deal to reduce reliance on military capability alone for national security and thus help in the promotion of arms control measures.

After these, mechanisms have been accepted by the regional powers, there would be time to think of the next step in arms control mutual and balanced force reduction for the Arabian sea region. This would be a more complex task because it is not a simple matter of arms balance between two states or even two military blocs, as in Europe. Negotiations on mutual and balanced force reduction in the Arabian sea region will be influenced by several variables, such as regime/systemic security, security of oil wealth against growing threats from beyond the region, the unresolved Iran-Iraq problem and Kashmir problem and finally the super power rivalry as it influences the Middle East, Persian Gulf and the Arabian sea. (Indian Ocean) of which the Arabian sea is the hub. It is possible that anti-insurgency capability and reactive defensive strategy might still remain the basis of the future mutual and balanced force reduction negotiations in the Arabian sea region.

Thus, while discussing effective and acceptable arms control measures for the Arabian sea region, one must not ignore factors like the tremendous leverage these oil rich states enjoy because of their oil power as well as their money power, they desire to seek military solutions to security problems not only in the region but also against outside powers and the desire to display their power and prestige in terms of the quality and quantity of their sophisticated military equipments and divices. All these reasons have led them to pursue a policy of massive arms acquisition in which process they were indirectly encouraged by the arms salesmen both on the official and the non-official level.

The arms control lobby, especially in the USA, has recently acquired enough power to obstruct, if not halt, the sale of arms to the Arabian sea region's countries. But arms control in any area, to be acceptable to the ruling elite of the countries concerned, must take into account their security perceptions, should enable them to develop a military capability sufficient to deter a foreign military threat, and ensure effective machinery for crisis of management if not conflict resolution. Only then can one fruitfully argue that the quantities of arms that they are buying are in fact more than they need, and that they are not only superfluous militarily but can also become politically counterproductive. It is this broad approach to the problem of arms control that can offer a reasonable chance to check the mad rush for the acquisition of arms in the region.

Littoral States Reaction

Overwhelming majority of the littoral and hinterland states and island republic in the Arabian sea have protested against the establishment of foreign bases, and the escalation of foreign naval presence in the Arabian sea. Only two countries-South Africa & Pakistan have supported U.S. Naval deployment and military build-up in the Arabian sea.

Since 1970, the Afro-Asian nations on the periphery of the Arabian sea have made concerted efforts to make the region free from naval arms race and foreign military bases. India supported a move at the Lusaka non-aligned Summit in Sept. 1970 which called upon all nations to consider and respect the Indian Ocean as well as Arabian sea region as a free great power rivalries. The proposal gained momentum when the UN General assembly on 16 Dec. 1972 adopted resolution 2832 (XXVI)-entitled Declaration of Indian Ocean as a whole as a zone of peace.¹⁰⁰ The resolution called upon the great powers to consult littoral states of the region with a view to :

- (a) halting the further escalation and expansion of their military presence in the region;
- (b) eliminating from the region all bases military installations and logistical support facilities, the disposition of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass

100. 151d. p. 130

destruction, and any manifestation of great power military presence conceived in the context of great power rivalry in the region. Time by time India, Iran and Sweden realised the U.N. General Secretary that with the conversion of Diego Garcia into a naval base and receiving air base facilities by U.S., the other powers will be eager to come in this area and new naval arms race will have begun. India and almost all the littoral states of this region have expressed their concern over the construction of base facilities in the region and strongly supported the proposal eliminating foreign bases therein. But the big powers have ignored this proposal of littoral states.

The political declaration of non-aligned Summit conference adopted in Colombo on 20 August 1976 asked the Big powers to heed the demands of the littoral and hinterland states in the North-western region and remaining India Ocean for peaceful tensionless area. The document condemned the establishment and expansion of foreign bases and military installations such as Diego Garcia, by the Great powers and called on them to dismantle all the existing foreign bases, which are or may be endangering the littoral's territorial integrity and peaceful development of countries in the region. India regretted that great powers had not shown themselves inclined to cooperate in its implementations. However in the Iran-Iraq crisis and events in the Red sea region, the U.S. navy stepped up the deployment of its warships from its Pacific and Mediterranean fleets in the Arabian sea-Persian Gulf region, especially since January 1979.

India's Reactions as Littoral States

India

Geographically, India enjoys a pivotal position with two great powers, China and the Soviet Union, to the North; Australia & the Pacific seaboard to the east; Africa and the Arab countries to the West; and the Vast Indian Ocean to the South. Therefore, she would always like to have the whole Indian Ocean as an area of peace, free from big power rivalries and military bases. But, with the establishment of military and nuclear bases like Diego Garcia, the Indian Ocean region and the Arabian sea area has become in utter disregard to the feelings of the people of the region, a zone of international tensions and super power rivalry. This threat to peace in the region is a matter of deep concern for India. India's history is a witness to the fact that the weakest point in her national security system is her vulnerable coast. A new threat is developing to her security and this time it is from the South and the West. It is not the southern and western neighbours who have designs on her territory; it is the increasing big power influence that threatens her independence.

For India, the Arabian sea is of immense significance, though her interests also lie in the Bay of Bengal. She would like to ensure that her security is not endangered from the south; that the sea and air routes are not disturbed; and that the activities of the major powers do not generate tension and

conflict in the area. The establishment of U.S. bases on the British territories in the Indian Ocean imposes threat and danger to the Arabian sea area, the movements of U.S.S.R. vessels in the area and the hostility of China-all jeopardise India's interests. She can not afford to be indifferent to these developments and has all along insisted that all systems of military alliances are undesirable; that the idea of filling a power Vacuum in the traditional sense should be given up; and that some way should be found to check the rivalry between the major powers in the area. She has also emphasized that the real security of the area depends upon its political stability and economic development, and that such a development should be accomplished through co-operative efforts. She believes that the philosophy behind the decision to set up military bases at strategic points in the Arabian sea and Indian Ocean, like the Anglo-American facilities at Diego Garcia, is obsolescent, for the days of domination by any power, however great are over.

In a radio and television interview in Singapore on 17 Jan. 1971, Mr. Swaran Singh, the former Indian Minister for defence, warned that the role of a policeman the big powers have taken upon themselves in the Indian Ocean would result in a bitter rivalry in the area mostly in the northern area of Indian Ocean i.e. Arabian sea area.¹⁰¹ Building of a communi-

101. V.K. Bhasin, Super Power rivalry in Indian Ocean, P. 128.

cation base in the Island of Diego Garcia will only bring in other big powers which may also want to assume the policeman's role. India is of the view that the creation of British Indian Ocean territory (BIOT) was an unfortunate step in the direction of bringing the cold war confrontation to the area, and that the only way to keep the Arabian sea free of tension is to remove military bases and foreign presence. If the Britain and U.S. are worried about a Soviet threat to her maritime routes in the Arabian sea, the majority of countries of the Arabian sea region felt equally concerned, with greater justification, about their trade routes in the Arabian sea.

India has expressed great concern over the Anglo-American decision to establish a naval base at Diego Garcia. At the time the high personalities of India conveyed India's opposition to the creation of these facilities to both the U.S. and the U.K. They wanted and saw the Arabian sea free from great power domination. To this end, India helped bring about the consensus at the Non-Aligned Nations Conference in Lusaka.¹⁰² That the whole of Indian Ocean be declared a zone of peace and demanded the Ocean be free of nuclear weapons. It is also applied in the case of Arabian sea because Arabian sea is a north western quadrant of the Indian Ocean.

India has taken kindly neither to the Russia nor to the American presence in the Arabian sea. The Minister of state for

102. Ibid, P. 128.

defence production, L.N. Mishra, assured the Rajya Sabha on 7 May, 1971 that the Government was aware that, besides the American fleet which was already there, the USSR fleet had also started coming into the Indian Ocean of late. This action of both the big powers could not left the Arabian sea region without taking in the impact.¹⁰³ He added that even China's naval fleet was trying to enter the Indian Ocean, and that India could not prevent the foreign warships sailing on the high seas including Arabian sea. Mrs. Indira Gandhi characterized the appearance of foreign warships in the area as the symptom of the power politics and it was definitely out of date. The Indian P.M. declared that India wanted the Indian Ocean to be an area of peace and cooperation, it is also implied in the case of Arabian sea, and that the military bases of outside powers would create tension and great power rivalry.¹⁰⁴

India has taken kindly neither to the Russian nor to the American presence in the Arabian sea region. The Minister of state for Defence Production, L.N. Mishra, said in Rajya Sabha on 7.5.71 that with the USA & USSR, China's naval fleet was trying to enter the region.¹⁰⁵ and that India could not prevent the foreign warships sailing on the high seas. Indian P. M. Mrs. Indira Gandhi in her speech on 8sept. 1970 in the Lusaka

103. Ibid, P. 128.

104. Ibid, P. 128.

105. Ibid, P. 129.

Non-Aligned Nations Conference declared that India wanted the whole Indian Ocean i.e. Arabian sea also to be an area of peace and co-operation, and that the Military bases of outside powers would create tension and great powers rivalry.¹⁰⁶ The supply of arms and other military aid of the U.K., U.S.A. & others to the Arabian sea coastal nations would create tension and breake the cooperation among them. On account of such activities India formally informed the common wealth secretary of her decision to withdraw from the eight nation study group set up by the Singapore conference of commonwealth Heads of Governments on 20 Jan. 1971 to look into the factors affecting the security of the maritime trade routes in the south Atlantic and the Arabian sea.

At the International Conference on the Indian Ocean against foriegn military bases and for zone of peace held in 1974, mostly littoral states with India demanded the removal of foreign bases from the Arabian sea region. At the time of opening Mr. Y. B. Chavan, the then Minister for External affairs said:

"The responsibility for halting this dangerous situation in this area was primarily of the great powers. The Government and the people of India wanted ~~the~~ elimination of foriegn military bases from the area and the ~~people of India wanted~~ preservation of peace in the Arabian sea as well as Indian Ocean.

106. Ibid, P. 129.

This was not for reasons of expediency. It was a principle of deep conviction.¹⁰⁷

Most of the Indian leaders are in this favour that the region should be remained free from super powers rivalry. India suggested the United Nations that the big powers and others should be associated with the International conference proposed to consider the implementation of the U.N. resolution declaring the Ocean as a whole (including Arabian sea) a zone of peace. But the U.S.A. refused to accept such type of suggestion without enlisting their support. These activities of big power in Arabian sea region impinge the India's security. Toward, off this danger, she is also keeping a watchful eye on the balance of power in Africa & Asia, which is likely to change, not because of any direct military action by the two super powers, but by agreements with countries like Pakistan that may feel tempted ~~byxxxxxx~~ to offer bases.

India was worried about the determination of U.S. to establish a more regular naval presence in the region. The former President V.V. Giri, in an address to the joint session of the two houses of the Indian Parliament on 18 Feb. 1974 said:

"Along with other countries of the region we have always urged that the Indian Ocean should be a zone of peace and should be free from military bases of big powers -----. It is, however,

107. Ibid, P. 130.

a matter of deep concern and disappointment to us that the UK and the USA have entered into an agreement for the establishment of a military base in the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean."

This decision of USA has been strongly criticised by the Indian press, leaders and people of India. One of the English dailies of New Delhi said :

"Diego Garcia is being converted into American nuclear attack base because ----- the growing accord between the Soviet Union and India requires to be threatened from as many points as possible. The Washington - Tokyo - Peking axis and the maximum dumping of arms in Iran and Pakistan are evidently not enough. Now this sub-continent has to be constantly watched and, whenever necessary, reminded that the nuclear threat always overhangs it."

In Ottawa on 19 June 1973 Mrs. Gandhi said about the U.S. Indian Ocean strategy, she denounced the arming of India's neighbours by big powers and expressed apprehensions that this would encourage militaristic elements in these countries who had little use for democratic and peaceful solutions. She said we protest against continued arms aid to countries in our neighbourhood and regard it with great concern. Later in Parliament in early 1974, she emphasised that the military bases and accumulation of arms around India are ominous and call for constant vigilance. Likewise, ninety three teachers of Banaras Hindu University Characterised the U.S. naval presence in the area as

an open threat to the security and national independence of the newly independent countries which are following the path of social progress.¹⁰⁸

India's objections to Diego Garcia and the related aspects of America's Indian Ocean Strategy are : first, the U.S. policy will trigger arms race between the super powers in an otherwise peaceful area. Second, the Soviet Union Naval presence is reactive, and because of various geographical and military constraints, does not pose any threat to the American interests; Third, the Naval competition among super powers is likely to fuel regional conflicts and might result in local wars by proxy; fourth, the U.S. decision on Diego Garcia is a violation of the U.N. resolution declaring the Indian Ocean as a whole a zone of peace; and finally, the U.S. move is at odds with the philosophy of detente between the super powers.

India has had a very tragic experience of foreign naval intrusions into the Arabian sea in the past; it was from the Arabian sea that her shores, like those of several other littoral countries, were threatened and her Independence jeopardised. Because of this India is deeply concerned about the intrusion of navies of big powers into the Arabian sea and their plans for building bases in the area. This fear is not illusory because "the economic, technological and military capabilities" of most

108. Ibid, P. 133.

of the littoral countries are such that they are susceptible to pressures from big powers. A study prepared by the Indian Institute for Defence Studies and analysts for the consultative committee of Parliament attached to the Defence Ministry also reflects this historical perspective. It warns that the U.S. is taking steps to acquire a capability to use force, if necessary, against the littoral powers; and that the U.S. strategy will generate Soviet reaction and super power politics which, in turn, will interact with local disputes, creating opportunities for intervention by them. The study recommends a balance between the two super powers at a "no presence" level instead of a balance "at a very high level of armament." These conclusions are partly rooted in the colonial memories dating back to the naval rivalry between Britain and France in the later half of the eighteenth century.

India's opposition to Diego Garcia partly stems from the fear of an eventual Chinese naval presence in the area, though it is not stated in so many words. India is particularly alive to the similarity of the Sino-U.S. interests against the Soviet armed presence, which has bearings on the Indo-Soviet political equation. India feels especially concerned when the U.S. partly justifies Diego Garcia by citing China's non-opposition to it. With memories of the common opposition of China and the U.S. to India's role in the liberation of Bangladesh still fresh, India sees America's attempts to involve China as Ominous. Indians

feel that, for no fault of India, America is forcing her to make an explicit choice in favour of Russia; accordingly, Indo-American misunderstanding has further deepened.

India has repeatedly rejected the western allegation that the Soviet navy enjoys base facilities in the Indian ports. Mr. Swaran Singh had a dig at the west when he said that it was exercised over the 'imaginary Soviet bases' in India, while a real one was being established at Diego Garcia affecting the Arabian sea area's activities and security. India also discounts the Western reports regarding the existence of Soviet bases elsewhere in the Arabian sea region. The Indian foreign Minister observed that the existence of Soviet bases in Madagascar, Mauritius, Socotra or Iraq was "not borne out by facts", as these bases could not have remained undetected. Inaugurating a seminar on the Indian Ocean in New Delhi on 9 May 1973, Swaran Singh not only described the Western press reports about a Soviet Naval base at Visakhapatnam as absurd, but he also asserted that there was no evidence to establish that the Soviet Union had any naval base in the Indian Ocean region.¹⁰⁹ Clarifying his Govt. stand on the developments in the Arabian sea, he said :

"I can only reiterate that according to all the information available to the Govt. of India there is no Soviet Naval base in the Arabian sea area. It is quite normal for newspapers

109. Ibid, P. 135.

to pick up sensational items. This does not, however, make them true. It is not possible for us to object to any nation's naval vessels moving about on high seas. We have, however, made it perfectly clear that we subscribe to the Lusaka declaration that there should be no domination of the Arabian sea by any Great power, and that it should remain free from tensions caused by big powers rivalries. We have taken action to draw the attention of the Governments of the USA, UK and USSR to our views on this matter."¹¹⁰

Besides, he made it clear that no facilities at India's ports or along her coastline were being given to either the Soviet or any other Navy. However, there were some powers, he said, which thought they had a global responsibility and wished to station naval forces not only in the Indian Ocean & Arabian sea, but also over the whole world. India was opposed to this policy and had conveyed her feelings not only to the powers concerned but also to the world at large. It would have really been strange if non-aligned India had offered territorial concessions to the Soviet Union or any other power to enable it to rule the waves near her shores.

India has asked both the USSR and the USA to keep hands off the Arabian sea. Mr. Atal Behari Bajpayee, the former foreign Minister, told the Lok Sabha in July 1977 that while India,

¹¹⁰. Ibid, p. 135.

like most other littoral states, was deeply interested in making the Arabian sea & Indian Ocean a zone of peace and free zone of domination, it was really for the US and the USSR to come to some sort of agreement on this question. He assured the House that India would not be satisfied untill the whole ocean was made a zone of peace and would continue all possible efforts towards this end.¹¹¹

India is trying to make useful relations with USA and China as USSR but this process thwarted under the pressure of new situations emerging in the Arabian sea area, because of the American moves.

At the 21st Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in New Delhi on 28 Oct. 1975, the littoral and hinterland states rallied behind India's demand for dismantling the US bases in Diego Garcia and Arabian sea region and for keeping the area free from great power rivalries. India was supported by the littoral states as Mauritius, Seychelles and others. As the Hindu observed¹¹² : "The littoral states of the region are quite prepared to refuel visiting warships and provide them with food and water and undertaking minor repairs, but they feel that the permanent presence of foreign warships in the region is an entirely

111. Ibid, P. 137.

112. Editorial : "Livalry in the Indian Ocean", The Hindu (Madras) 18 Nov. 1974.

different thing. Hence the general criticism of the American plan to establish a naval base on the Island of Diego Garcia which attract the entry of others in the Arabian sea area." India is determined to redouble its efforts in concert with the other littoral states to mobilise world opinion for the elimination of military bases. It is India's strong belief that if the UN declaration on the region is implemented, resulting in the elimination of Great power rivalry in the area, the regional security of the littoral states would be improved immeasurably.

India is anxious lest the Arabian sea should be turned into a cockpit of big power politics. But India is trying in continuation that Arabian sea should not converted into a diase of disastrous activities. It is India which has to bear this responsibility.

Indian Position regarding the freedom of high seas was explained by Swaran Singh in the course of a debate. He said:¹¹³ "Indian Ocean is a wide area starting from the Arabian sea and Oman coast down to the South-Western tip of Australia and South Africa and all the littoral countries of Africa.

Jawahar Lal Nehru himself once pointed out this stating

113. IDSA Vol. XII, No. 1, July-Sept. 1979, P. 73.

that the Indian Ocean being a vast area, waters outside India's territorial limit was naturally open to the Naval Vessels of any country and suggested that India should protest only when these forces were obviously detrimental to India's interests, and not otherwise.¹¹⁴

Addressing the foreign Ministers conference of non-aligned nations in Belgrade on 26 July 1978, External Affairs Minister, A.B. Bajpayee, urged that the talks must be resumed and the objective of demilitarisation of the Ocean must be pursued with purposeful urgency. However, in the wake of the ~~six~~ crisis in Iran and events in the Red sea region, the U.S. Navy stepped up the deployment of its warships from its pacific and mediterranean fleets in the Arabian sea. - Persian Gulf region, especially since January 1979. The U.S. Navy is keeping three vessel middle East Force at Arabian sea' in the Persian Gulf. A task force arrived in early January to avert what was described as possible Soviet moves in Iran. It was also a gesture of reassurance to the pro-west countries in the region over possible Soviet advances in the area.¹¹⁵

The U.S. Defence Department on 6 march ordered the despatch of a five-warship task force led by 80,000 dwt aircraft

114. Jawatkar, Diego Garcia in International Diplomacy, P. 176.

115. Ibid, P. 78.

carrier constellation to the Arabian sea on a 'muscle-flexing' demonstration, to prevent the Soviet backed south Yemen from inflicting a military defeat on North Yemen.¹¹⁶

This was point of reaction of the coastal countries of Arabian sea and Indians also that this region should be an area of peace and cooperation. Military bases of outside powers would create tensions and great power rivalry in the region. India strongly criticised Britains move to allow its colonial territories in the Arabian sea to be used for the construction of military facilities. It described the creation of the British Indian Ocean Territory as an unfortunate step. India's chief representative Samar Sen said in the U.N. General Assembly, "The action of the British Government in detaching certain islands from its colonial territories to form the so called BIOT for military purposes can not promote peace but only tension." India formally communicated its objections to the U.S. & U.K. Governments on 17 & 18 Dec. 1970 on the Anglo-American decision to build a naval facility on the island because this action influences the Arabian sea area also.

116. Ibid. P. 79.

Pakistan

Pakistan does not seem to be serious about freeing the Arabian sea from big powers rivalry, and her support given to the idea of the Indian Ocean being a 'Peace Zone' has always been more superficial than real. It is, indeed, sad that Pakistan, whose six hundred miles of coastline is washed by the Arabian sea, tries to justify the existence of foreign bases there. Strange as it may seem, Pakistan's attitude to the Arabian sea is largely formed by her alleged fears of a naval threat from India. Pakistan is allergic even to the name of the Indian Ocean, and has suggested quite a number of times that the name should be modified. She feels that the ocean should be more legitimately called the Afro-Asian Ocean¹¹⁷, as this name has the sanction of geography and is also expressive of the bonds that unite the two emergent continents.

There is hardly any consistency in Pakistan's attitude to the developments in the Arabian sea. Although she professes that the Arabian sea be declared a area of free of nuclear weapon, she has, at the same time, no objection to Diego Garcia being converted into an American base. Pakistan has, in fact, reacted favourably to the American plans to expand military facilities in the Diego Garcia and others in Arabian sea. Still to insist, as the late P.M. Bhutto did, that the American base

117. V.K. Bhasin, Super Power rivalry in Indian Ocean,

is prejudicial to the interests of the littoral countries, is mere rhetoric. The inevitable conclusion about Pakistan's Arabian sea policy is that she proposes to be an ally of the USA even when the latter violates the wishes of the littoral states. That, of late, Pakistan's Arabian sea policy has become even more opportunistic, is evident from the fact that the former Pakistani President, Ayub Khan, despite his well known pro-US attitude, had not favoured the united states plans to station a nuclear task force in the Arabian sea. Politically the move would be most unpopular and countries in Africa and Asia would strongly resent it. So far as Pakistan was concerned such a force would only add to her problems.¹¹⁸

Pakistan has never missed an opportunity for exaggerating India's naval threat to her. Pakistan's view was that the smaller countries of the area were likely to be the victims of India's naval ambitions after the British withdrew from the Arabian sea area. Pakistan officials and scholars have even gone to the extent of blaming India for giving the "defacto-bases to the Soviet Union in the Bombay, Goa and other places." The Indian Government has, however, repeatedly stated that she has not given any base to Russia.¹¹⁹ Hence, all Pakistani charges are totally weightless. This untenable attitude of Pakistan is likely to persist, for she not only sees a danger from India but

118. Ibid, P. 164.

119. Ibid, P. 165.

also from Afghanistan in the north-west. It appears that the sole motive of Pakistan's false propaganda is to extract more military aid from the USA and China. Though Pakistan has no formal pact with China, their relations are very cordial and Pak can look to China for aid when in distress. Underlying this friendship, the late Mr. Bhutto said :

"China is the only country which will be sympathetic to Pakistan's real requirements. This is so because that country's interest in the sub-continent coincides with that of Pakistan--Pakistan will always need a plus factor for coping with India." Whether the Government likes it or not, it so happens that the plus factor is the PRC. If that factor is removed, Pakistan will always be at the mercy of all three great powers and India.¹²⁰

America is Pakistan's another prop and the latter has been increasingly dependent upon the regular inflow of American military supplies. For instance, the expansion of Pakistan's submarine force in 1972 was undertaken with American assistance¹²¹ and, interestingly, two US navy destroyers were transferred to the Pakistan navy on the day the former PM, Mr. Bhutto, accused the United States of trying to overthrow his regime.¹²² When the U.S. Defence Department declassified its records in 1972,

120. Ibid, P. 165.

121. Ibid, P. 165.

122. Ibid, P. 165.

it was revealed that prior to the 1965 war, Pakistan recieved eight times as much military aid from America as did India. The documents showed that from 1950 through June 1965, the US gave Pakistan military aid worth \$671.6 million.¹²³ Despite the Government's assurance to the Congress that arms shipment to Pakistan had been stopped, the US air force airlifted to Pakistan, on a priority basis, \$ 5,00,000 worth of aviation spare parts in July 1971. It was further revealed that, after President Yahya Khan's troops had started their genocidal programme in Bangladesh, the US government allowed an export of \$ 3.8 million worth of military supplies to Pakistan, notwithstanding repeated public statements that only non-lethal items were being sent.

After the 1971 war, Mr. Bhutto was anxious to obtain arms and equipments from the US to replace what Pakistan had lost during the last war with India. The Nixon administration gave indications that it would restart military aid to Pakistan and they soon proved to be true. President Nixon notified the Congress that the conditions in Pakistan were returning to normal and, therefore, the Congressional restrictions on the US military and economic aid imposed because of the 1971 Indo-Pak war were no longer applicable.¹²⁴ Subsequently, the Nixon administration

123. Ibid, P. 166.

124. Ibid, P. 166.

proposed an allocation of \$ 5.2 million for military aid to Pakistan during 1972. The US step raised honest doubts in many a mind that the US was not strengthening the Pakistan war-machine for an anticipated showdown with India, for the parts of torpedoes and other naval equipment, which were given to Pakistan could be used only against the Indian Navy. That, there doubts were not entirely baseless, was evident from America's open threat of a large scale military aid to Pakistan to put psychological pressure on India during the last Indo-Pak war. While direct arms shipments were ruled out from the start, America gave military assistance to Pak through several of the latter's Arab allies, including Iran. It has been confirmed officially in Washington that both Jordan and Libya had sent American military equipments, including bomber aircrafts, to Pak.

With the renewed American arms inflow into Pakistan after the last war, there has emerged a strong possibility of Washington's angling a military base on the Pakistan coast in exchange. This was disclosed by the then External Affairs Minister Y.B. Chavan, in Lok Sabha on 18 Feb. 1975.¹²⁵ The members of Parliament also alleged that the US was sounding Pakistan for a base in Makaran and that preparations had already commenced to convert Gwadar, one of the harbours in Makaran, into a nuclear

125. Ibid, P. 167.

base. Makaran is the coastal region of South-east Iran and south-western Pakistan, extending along the Gulf of Oman for about 1000 kms; there are many harbours along this sand coastline but Gwadar is the most important of them all.

Iran has been purchasing a large amount of arms from the USA, and a large part of it is likely to find its way to Pakistan as it happened in 1971. That the two countries have close military links is borne out by the enthusiasm with which Pakistan hailed Iran's decision to build a strong naval base at Chah Bahr.¹²⁶ The proposed base on the Arabian sea is close to Pakistan's borders and is, therefore, of interest to her. Situated at a small distance from Karachi, the base would further strengthen the already intimate links between the Iranian and the Pakistan navies. Moreover, the base can have several favourable political implications for Pakistan. Iran has always shown concern for Pakistan's stability and the strong Iranian forces positioned close to Pakistan's border could reassure Pakistan in a crisis. The fleet units on the base would influence events in Pakistan whenever the latter so desires. The base, being close to Makaran coast, can also serve to deal with the Baluchi unrest should it develop to serious proportions.

In her bid to strengthen herself militarily, Pakistan has resorted to every possible stratagem. It is interesting that in

126. Ibid, P. 168.

1971, she diverted even the US humanitarian relief funds to the construction of projects for military defences against India on the border. This public works grant to Islamabad amounted to about \$ 10 million in US owned Pakistan rupees and was made available in Oct. 1971. There are even confirmed reports that the US military assault boats, which had been loaned to Pakistan for cyclone and tidal wave relief in 1970, were used for suppressing the Bangladesh independence movement in 1971. Pakistan had even threatened to go nuclear if the US arms were refused to her.¹²⁷ Mr. Bhutto warned that, if the US continued to refuse arms supply to Pakistan, he would turn to the 'Arab friends' for finance to obtain arms. He asserted that the USA was obliged to supply arms to Pakistan under bilateral treaties. Guided by her own interests, the US decided to resume arms supply to Pakistan. But the US move to rearm Pakistan would be disastrous both for South Asia and north-western Asia. Mr. Chester Bowles, a former US Ambassador to India, had rightly stated that the resumption of US arms aid to Pakistan would disturb peace and jeopardise the prospect of normalisation of relations among the countries of the subcontinent. He thought that this would encourage Pakistan to take a warlike posture, and would be detrimental to the cause of peace in this subcontinent.¹²⁸ Thus, the US move to resume military supplies

127. Ibid, P. 168.

128. Ibid, P. 169.

to Pakistan can not but be unfortunate and "would make that country more intransigent."

Pakistan has been increasing her naval strength with the assistance of USA and, consequently, the presence of Pakistan's naval ships in the Arabian sea has increased. The American move to strengthen Pak's navy will have far-reaching repercussions on the geo-political equations in Asia. The aims of the USA arms aid to Pakistan are to bolster the morale of the pro-west Arab Kingdoms and to enable Pakistan to play a role in west Asia which is in conformity with America's interests. This aid, along with America's keenness to establish good relations with Peking, seems to be a part of the US overall strategy in the Arabian sea. But this strategy is bound to intensify the existing rivalries in the Arabian sea. Ping-Pong has already given way to power-tennis and the Arabian sea area is becoming a wimbledon for all the championships and challenges. It is because of her partisanship for the US and overreaction to India that Pakistan has never been serious in her efforts to demilitarise the Arabian sea and the mother of the Arabian sea also i.e. Indian Ocean.

Iran's Reaction

In a report, "out Frontier in the Indian-Ocean", Tehran's English daily, Kayhan, quoted the Shah of Iran as saying :

"Until three or four years ago I only had the defence of the Persian Gulf in mind. This was because most of our (oil) existed in regions to the north-west of Bandar Abbas and the straits of Hormuz. We wanted to safeguard that wealth and keep open the way through which it could reach the outside world. But then came events that forced US to think of the defence of Gulf of Oman and Iran's Coast. Then other events in the world taught us that the sea contiguous to the Gulf of Oman, and I mean the Indian Ocean, recognises no frontiers."¹²⁹

Iran has stressed the need for keeping the Arabian sea free from power struggle and area of peace. The Chairman of the Iranian Senate, Jaafer Sherif Enami, stated during his visit to Indonesia that Iran shared the view that it was necessary to convert the Arabian sea into a area of peace, free from super power rivalry. The Shah of Iran also said in Mehran on 28 Sept. 1975 that the Gulf and the Arabian sea must remain free from foreign intervention and big power military rivalry. Speaking at a joint session of the Majlis (Lower House) and the Senate, the Shah suggested that the security of the

129. V.K. Bhasin, Super Power rivalry in the Indian Ocean, P. 155.

region should be maintained by the littoral states themselves.¹³⁰

Iran has supported India's stand on the Arabian sea and the Indian Ocean also. A joint communique issued at the end of the five day visit to Iran by the former External Affairs Minister Y.B. Chavan, in November 1976, said:

"The Iranian Foreign Minister Stressed the importance of the security of the Arabian sea and Persian Gulf. In this extent he underlined the necessity of protecting peace and stability of the area through cooperation among all the littoral states without any outside interference."¹³¹

In October 1975, the Iranian Foreign Minister, Mr. Abbas Ali Khalatbari, expressed Iran's worry about the efforts by both the US and the Soviet Union to increase their naval presence in the Arabian sea. He, however, hoped to convince the big powers that their vital interests in the area would not be jeopardised if some kind of international cooperation could be agreed upon. He felt that the denuclearisation of the area could be the first stage in a process leading to de-militarisation and eventual conversion of the Arabian sea into a peace area.¹³² Only then, he thought, the dangers of a big power confrontation in the Arabian sea could be avoided.

130. Ibid, P. 156.

131. Ibid, P. 156.

132. Ibid, P. 156.

Speaking at a press conference in New Delhi on 3 Oct. 1973, the Shah of Iran proposed the creation of a new grouping of the Arabian sea countries on the basis of economic, political and eventually, naval cooperation. According to him, the political and economic cooperation once established would automatically generate an urge to defend the sea lanes in the Arabian sea region. The Shah felt that, to begin with, the membership of the proposed organisation should be restricted to the "northern tier" of the Indian Ocean i.e. the Arabian sea-Iran, India & Pakistan; it can eventually be extended to Indo-China, USSR and even the African countries. The Shah, however, offered no time table for the proposed regional groupings, and wanted their creation to be a long term programme.

The Sha's proposal for a wider regional cooperation among the Arabian sea states amounted only to a non-institutional arrangement to promote common interests and to ensure oil supplies by safeguarding the Persian Gulf and the Arabian sea. The bases of the proposal were the possibility of a greater cooperation between the littoral states than ever before and a common interests in the security and stability of the region in order to ensure safe navigation for the nations depending on the Iranian oil supplies. Therefore, the Shah of Iran had the dream of a 'Common Market' of the Arabian sea Community and was quite optimistic about its realisation. But India did not endorse the long term security implications of

the Shah's scheme, which appeared to be directed against Russia with whome Delhi has been maintaining cordial relations and with whome Iran has a Common frontier stretching over 2,500 Kilometers.

Long back, Iran recognised the need to acquire "military muscle" to establish her primacy in the region. In the early seventies, she proposed to increase her navy's striking power several times within the next few years and hoped to become, within a decade, an Arabian sea power, capable of asserting her right to the Arabian sea waters. Iran's interest in the blue water beyond the Gulf has been steadily increasing for some time now. The Shah's forceful declaration that Iran's frontiers are not merely the boundaries of the Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz but extended to the Red sea and the Arabian sea has attracted world attention, for the Shah had never spoken so bluntly about Iran's becoming an Arabian sea power. During the Shah's rule, Iran had the full backing of the US and the Iranian forces worked in close co-operation with their US counterparts. In January 1975, the Iranian naval force and the American Seventh fleet task force, headed by the nuclear-powered carrier, the Enterprise, entered the Arabian sea and started a joint exercise in the Persian Gulf.¹³³ It was because of this intimacy with the US that Iran refused to join an

133. Ibid, P. 158.

oil embargo against the US. The Arabs viewed this move as a proof of the tacit alliance between the US and Iran to expropriate the Persian Gulf oil.

What dispurbs the naval strategists is the possible collaboration between Iran and such powers as the US, the UK and South Africa to lay a sea way from Maurities through the Diego Garcia island and the Indonesian waters to Australlia. Following the conclusion of the Soviet-Iraqi treaty, the US became more dependent on Iran in the Gulf. Since Iran's navy is completely western and the new vessels would also come from the west, doubts have arisen that the expanded and modern Iranian Navy will act as a substitute for the long fleet train the western powers wanted to establish between south Africa and Australia. Not with standing her denial that she has given naval base facilities to Iran, Maurities has already given the latter, at least, certain naval facilities with the explicit motive of making money; the refuelling, rest and recreation facilities she would provide to the Iranian ships and their personnel would bring her sizable funds. It is difficult to conceive how a naval base at Maurities, over two thousand miles away in the southern end of the Arabian sea, can be useful for Iran unless its facilities are really meant for the united states. Even this does not sound logical in view of the US building up her own communications base at Diego Garcia. Another Iranian naval base proposed to be built at Chah Bahr on

the Arabian sea, close to Pakistan's borders, would be of considerable strategic importance to Iran. The fleet units stationed at this port would dominate the Gulf of Oman and give complete protection to Iran and the Gulf region.

But Iran is aware that the best means of countering a threat from Russia is to develop normal relations with that country and to keep the western nations as additional insurance. This is precisely what the Shah had achieved : he had insured the Russian interest in Iran's stability is in any case assured because of America's stakes in the latter's oil. By judiciously cultivating the interest of the super powers in her stability, the shah dreamt of becoming a super naval power on the basis of Iran's oil wealth and foreign assistance.

Iran wants to see the Arabian Gulf transformed into a Persian lake and also desires to dominate the Indian Ocean. In order to police the Gulf, she had built up the most powerful naval, air and land forces in the region. With a population larger than that of all other Gulf countries combined and the strongest naval build up, Iran hopes to gain a predominant position in the Gulf. But countries like India which fully appreciate the need for an economic cooperation between the countries of the region, including Iran, will not accept any sort of Iranian economic hegemony. Although the Shah is no more in power, Iran would continue her effort to expand her naval programmes.

Due to the American human rights policy of carter administration the gravity of the Iranian revolution was realised around sept-Oct- 1979, the carter administration found that it was too late.¹³⁴ Iran was determined to attack on oil tankers coming from other countries and through the straits of Hormuz, if America continue to give up the support to Shah and try to crush the anti Shah revolution.

With the success of revolution in 1979 Feb., and emergence of ~~emergence of~~ Ayatollah Khomeini as a new leader of Iran, the situation underwent further change. Khomeini decided to disengage Iran from all military alliances with the US and its allies and the personnel associated with them were expelled.¹³⁵ It became a member of the non-aligned movement.¹³⁶ The Soviets who were keen to take the place of Americans, also came in for sharp criticism by the new regime following their military intervention in Afghanistan. On the 1st anniversary of revolution, the Khomeini asked the freedom loving countries to "eliminate super powers from history." This makes a clear departure from the Shah's pro US stand on super power rivalry in the Arabian sea. To reduce oil production by almost half. To adopt a hardline posture on crude oil prices. To relieve Iran from

134. ~~ibid~~, IDSA, Vol. XII, No. 1, July/Sept. 79, Page 106.

135. Ibid, P. 106.

136. Ibid, P. 106.

the responsibility of safety of oil tankers after they have been loaded at Iranian ports. Iran is also unwilling to take any responsibility for the safety of oil tankers passing through the straits of Hormuz.¹³⁷

These actions coupled with a militant anti super power posture, adopted by Komeini, created a new situation where US credibility vis-a-vis its other allies in the Arabian sea region has eroded considerably.¹³⁸ The new Iranian posture has demonstrated that by disengaging itself from the US, the security of Iran has not been threatened; as a matter of fact the new policy has increased its options. Such an open defiance of super power hegemony and its success has stimulated fresh thinking by the other countries in the region. The reduction of oil production by other countries, like Iran, will affect the whole range of economic activity in the US and its allies. Khomeini also turned down US cooperation offer.

Iran's attitude towards big power presence in the Arabian sea was a cautious one. Asked about his views on the Anglo-American proposals for the expansion of facilities on Diego Garcia island, the Shah of Iran told a press conference in New Delhi on 3 Oct. 1974 that while in principle he was against outside interference in the region, the question was "not that simple."¹³⁹

137. Ibid, P. 106

138. Ibid, P. 106.

139. Jawatkar, Diego Garcia in International Diplomacy, P. 199.

Iran and India seem to hold identical views on a number of world issues. Before returning to his country after his visit to India, Iranian P.M., Amir Abbas Hoveyda told the 'Times of India' in Bombay on 14 May 1976 that Iran and India had the same approach to great power rivalries in the Arabian sea. "where there is one big power you can not stop another", he remarked. His obvious reference was to the Soviet presence in the area, although he tried to placate both the super powers naming them 'outside powers'. He pleaded that all the littoral states of the region should join in the efforts to ensure freedom of navigation by themselves.¹⁴⁰ His stress that the safety and security of the Arabian sea & the Persian Gulf was the collective responsibility of the nations that border each water-~~sanctuary~~ way and that these should be kept open to the unhindered flow of trade and navigation¹⁴¹ did not necessarily mean that there was no divergence between the Iranian & Indian outlook on both global and regional issues. As Dilip Mukherjee observed : "Tehran is very concerned about the Soviet Union's naval presence in the Arabian sea, while India views the plans for a U.S. base in Diego Garcia & others in the Arabian sea x area."

Iran's determination to extend its security perimeter into the Arabian sea became known when the Shah told men of his

140. Ibid, P. 199.

141. Ibid, P. 199.

Navy in Nov. 1972 that the Navy's defensive lines went beyond the Persian Gulf and the Oman into the Arabian sea and the Indian Ocean also. The Shah then was reported to have remarked : Events in the world have taught us that the sea continuous to the Gulf of Oman, and I mean the Arabian sea recognises no frontiers. We are not merely thinking of the straits of Hormuz (56 mile passage separating Iran from Oman at the Southern entry). We are thinking of Iran's security perimeter and I am not speaking in terms of a few kilometers.¹⁴²

Reporting the Shah's speeches, the Tehran correspondent of London's 'Daily Telegraph' quoted him saying : "Iran is becoming an regional power."

Mauritius Reactions

Being situated in the southern end of the Arabian sea, Mauritius is greatly perturbed over the big power rivalry in the Arabian sea and the possibility of the introduction of nuclear weapons in this area. Realising the island's strategic importance, many Mauritians fear that they will soon become a key pawn in a cold-war maritime chess game. Therefore, Mauritius is a staunch supporter of the attempts to make the region a peace area. She has denounced the intensification of naval activities in the sea in all the international organisations

142. Ibid, P. 200.

to which she belongs, including the OAU, the Commonwealth, the non-aligned club and the United Nations. On 30 Sept. 1975 the P.M. of Mauritius, Sir Sewoosagar Ramgoolam, appealed to all major powers in the United Nations not to increase their military strength in the Arabian sea. He said: "We invite the great powers and major maritime users of the Arabian sea to refrain from all actions incompatible with the objectives of the declaration of the Indian Ocean region as a zone of peace."¹⁴³ In one of his visits to India, he declared that his Government was in absolute agreement with New Delhi's effort to ensure that the Arabian sea remained a nuclear free area.¹⁴⁴ The foreign Minister of Mauritius also expressed concern at the consequence of big power rivalry in the course of his talks in New Delhi in December 1969¹⁴⁵, and the Mauritius officials agreed to remain in contact with the other littoral states on the developments in the Arabian sea area.

Paradoxically, the small island of Mauritius has also figured in the great power rivalry between France, Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union to establish a military presence in the area. But, apart from a British Communications facility, there is no military installation in Mauritius. Mauritius has a defence agreement with Britain, which, however,

143. V.K. Bhasin, *Super Power rivalry in Indian Ocean*, p. 152.

144. *Ibid*, p. 152.

145. *Ibid*, p. 152.

does not imply that the former is willing to involve herself in all the developments taking place in the region. Under the agreement, both the countries are obliged to come to each other's assistance in the event of external attack. Mauritius has given Britain the right to station her armed forces on her soil in peace and war and to use the shore facilities there.

But the relations between the two have continued to deteriorate since the conservative government's declaration in early 1974 to expand the existing facilities on the island of Diego Garcia in collaboration with the United States. Probably, a greater disappointment to Rangoon's government has been Britain's failure, despite promises, to reverse her decision on Diego Garcia.

Mauritius has also entered into an agreement with Russia. In fact, the Soviet Union's relations with Mauritius have remained friendly since 1968 when the latter became independent. In the beginning, some cultural agreements were made; these were followed by an agreement on fishing in April 1974.¹⁴⁶

Under the latter agreement, the Soviet undertook to train the Mauritians in commercial fishing techniques, and the Soviet trawlers were, in turn, given the harbouring facilities at Port Louis. Some western strategists apprehend that it can

146. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

be the beginning of the Russian presence at this strategic point, particularly when the Soviet Military ships have already started paying occasional courtesy visits to Mauritius. The Russians have, in fact, achieved another success in the quiet art of infiltration by which the soviet naval strength and influence are being steadily increased in important areas of the Arabian sea. It can not be ruled out that Moscow's eyes are on the island of Mauritius as a likely site for a naval base. The Soviet engineers on the island have been exploring the feasibility of a base on the assumption that Mauritius may some day offer a permanent home for some of Russia's warships in the region. However, Mauritius is careful not to antagonise the littoral states.

Port Louis, the capital, is considered by many as a prospective base for big powers. But the limitations of Port Louis as a harbour militate against this assumption. Among other things, it can accommodate only eleven ocean-going vessels and six smaller vessels at a time; it is a lighterage port; it has only minimum repair facilities and virtually none for servicing warships; and ships of all nations are being allowed to take on water and food there and can also bunker, if necessary.

Deigo Garcia, the fast developing naval and air base in the Indian Ocean, is next door to Mauritius and lies just 1200 miles to its north-east. Deigo Garcia in fact, was a part of Mauritius until the latter's independence in 1968. Taking away

of Diego Garcia from Mauritius was one of the conditions that Britain had imposed on the island for its freedom. Mauritius was to get a cash payment in exchange of Diego Garcia, and was permitted to retain mineral rights, especially off shore oil rights.¹⁴⁷ But it is controversial whether there was an understanding between Mauritius & Britain over Diego Garcia - especially about its use as a tracking station or communication centre, or about its being upgraded into a full-fledged military base. Mauritius view on Diego Garcia does not accord with the official British position and it appears that no such understanding ever existed. But the British and the American Governments have gone ahead with the base at Diego Garcia. For all practical purposes, Diego Garcia has now become an American outpost, British denials notwithstanding. Mauritius has made repeated requests for visits to Diego Garcia in order to satisfy herself about the British claims that no military base is being established at the site. Up to now all her requests to inspect the work at Diego Garcia have been flatly turned down.¹⁴⁸ The Mauritians officials simply do not know what is happening there; it is suspected in high circles that the US-British refusal to allow an inspection of Diego Garcia by Mauritius shows that the two western powers are going even further than they have admitted and are possibly constructing nuclear silos which must be affected the Arabian sea area.

147. Ibid, P. 154.

148. Ibid, P. 154.

Fearing a big power concentration, Senior Mauritian officials question the validity of a military build-up in the Indian Ocean region. They do not see any possible danger in peace time to the Western ships carrying oil from the Gulf states to Europe or the United States. They feel that the bogey of a sudden Russian attack on the oil tankers has no ground and the unfounded fear is a hangover from the cold war days. The Mauritians are convinced that it is the United States which is being expansionist and aggressive, while the Soviet Union is defensive and only responds to the American moves. They believe that the Russian anti-submarine force in the Arabian sea is a counterweight to the US missile-carrying nuclear submarines in the sea. Apart from the chicken and egg situation in regard to either of the super power being the first offender, the available evidence suggests that the United States has the military initiative in the Arabian sea for the time being.

Mauritius is extremely concerned with the possibility of the big power rivalry in the Arabian sea region. At times she has even thought of appealing to the world court against the breach of agreement by Britain in regard to the use to which Diego Garcia should be put. But any favourable judgement would be meaningless and almost impossible to implement in the face of the transformation of the Arabian sea area from a peace area to an area of confrontation. The Mauritians, however, fix the responsibility of the present rivalry in the Arabian sea

area on the Britishers who, along with their American allies, have decided to upgrade the Diego Garcia base and the establishment of other bases in the area in utter disregard of the repeated requests made by the Mauritius and other littoral states. Meanwhile, Mauritius can be no more than a helpless spectator of the developments that are taking place in the Arabian sea area.

The location and size make Mauritius strategically very important to facilitate outsiders for having their naval and Air bases. Mauritius, a small and economically very weak nation may perhaps find it difficult to down tempting offers of great powers in return of such facilities. That's why not only Americans, Soviets are keeping their vigil on this very tiny island but some other powers are too anxious to enhance their interference in this tiny island. It is often blamed for her inclination to provide a naval base to Iran but the then external affairs Minister Mr. Surendra Pal Singh ~~singh~~ denied in Rajya Sabha on 22 Dec. 1972.¹⁴⁹ That Mauritius is not providing such facilities to Iran. Though it may be said that Russia has some base facilities in Mauritius but the weekly Mauritius times on 10 May 74 wrote that there is no great fraud than the allegation that Mauritius is about to provide a base to USSR. The Government of Mauritius has already

149. News Review, January 1973.

declared her policy that she will not allow any one to enjoy base facility in Mauritius. Mauritius may prove to be an alternative in this region against USA Diego Garcia base for Soviets. For this purpose Soviets have fisheries agreement with Mauritius to use port Louis and fly crews in and out of LaPLAISANCE Airport.¹⁵⁰ But Mauritius has declared her foreign policy of Non-alignment and has assured the nations through various declarations that she will not allow any other country to use Mauritius as its base, but the western powers view with seriousness the growing Soviet Mauritius Friendship. Big powers are not keen to accept this principle of Indian Ocean a zone of Peace.¹⁵¹ Therefore, Mauritius decidedly holds the key to any strategic balance of power not only in the Indian Ocean but also in the Arabian sea region.

150. H.V. Sharma, Vikrant, Vol. II, No. 9, June 1972.

151. Op.cit., 2 June 1972.

Reaction of Somalia & Seychelles

Somalia which had allowed the Soviet Union to build up a huge naval complex at Berbera overlooking the Gulf of Aden, has now offered the same facilities to the US in return for economic and financial assistance. It now appears that Somalia would redouble its efforts to induce the Reagan administration to step up military aid. President Siad Barre of Somalia is apt to bank upon the hawks in the Reagan administration to extract massive military aid from the US in return for more extensive base facilities than he has already given.¹⁵²

Somalia which is one of the Seven poorest countries in the world with \$ 70 per year per capita income has become a pawn in a power struggle between the Soviets and the Americans. It had allowed the Soviets Strategic activity on a scale unparalleled in independent Africa in return for military aid until 1977. After the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Somalia welcomed the American aid in return for air and naval facilities in Berbera.¹⁵³

As president siad Barre once remarked : "The man who is drawing does not question those who extend a helping hand." The Americans had cut off aid to the Somalia because under a contract negotiated with an earlier Government, they had permitted registry of foreign ships which made runs to Cuba and North

152. Jawatkar, Diego Garcia in International Diplomacy, P. 205

153. Ibid, P. 205.

Vietnam. But the Somalia tried to mend diplomatic bridges with the Americans after ousted the Soviets from Berbera.¹⁵⁴

Seychelles

The Seychelles, a group of 92 small islands occupying a total land area of just 107 square miles but spanning an expanse of ocean more than 1000 times as large, it was quite natural to express concern over the Diego Garcia build up. Even before the scychelles become an independent Republic after 162 years of British colonial rule, its Chief Minister, James Mancham, told in New Delhi on 13 August 1975 that the whole Indian ocean including Arabian sea should be an area free from super penetration because any such penetration carried with it the potential of conflict on the following day, he explained that if one super power infiltrated into the sea, it "has to be counterbalanced."¹⁵⁵

The Seychelles's proximity with the U.S. base on Diego Garcia, which is directly linked with the military activities in the Arabian sea & the Gulf region about a thousand miles east

154. Ibid, P. 205.

155. Ibid, P. 205.

on the Chagos archipelago-can not be wished away. The seychelles and India hold identical views on important world issues, including their total opposition to the establishment of the US naval base in Diego Garcia and diplomatic interference of the affairs of Arabian sea littoral states. These were reflected when the seychelles President, James Mancham, welcomed Surender Pal Singh, the State Minister of Tourism and Development, who arrived in Mahe (Seychelles) on 25 June 1976 to represent India at the independence celebrations of the seychelles. Immediately after being sworn in as President of the newly independent Republic on 29 June, 1976, Mancham expressed his country's total opposition to the establishment of military bases in the Arabian sea. Any super power naval rivalry in the sea was only at the expense of small nations on the littoral of the Arabian sea, he declared.¹⁵⁶

This was reiterated by his successor, President France Albert Rene, during his New Delhi, visit in May 1980. The Indian side expressed appreciation for the courageous stand taken by the seychelles against the military presence of non-littoral states in the Arabian sea region.¹⁵⁷

156. Ibid, P. 206.

157. Ibid, P. 206.

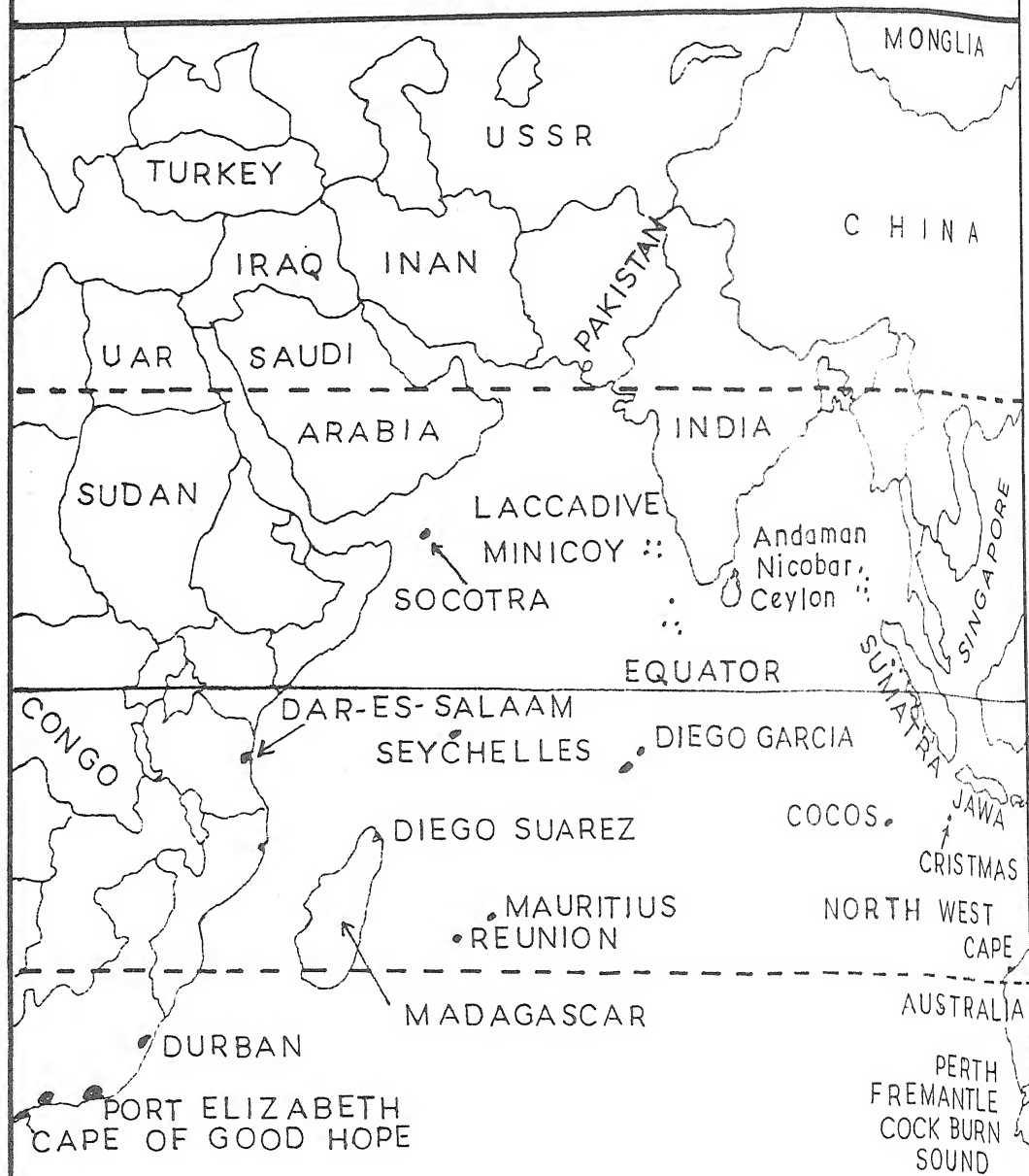
CHAPTER V

Arabian Sea in the Regional Security Environment

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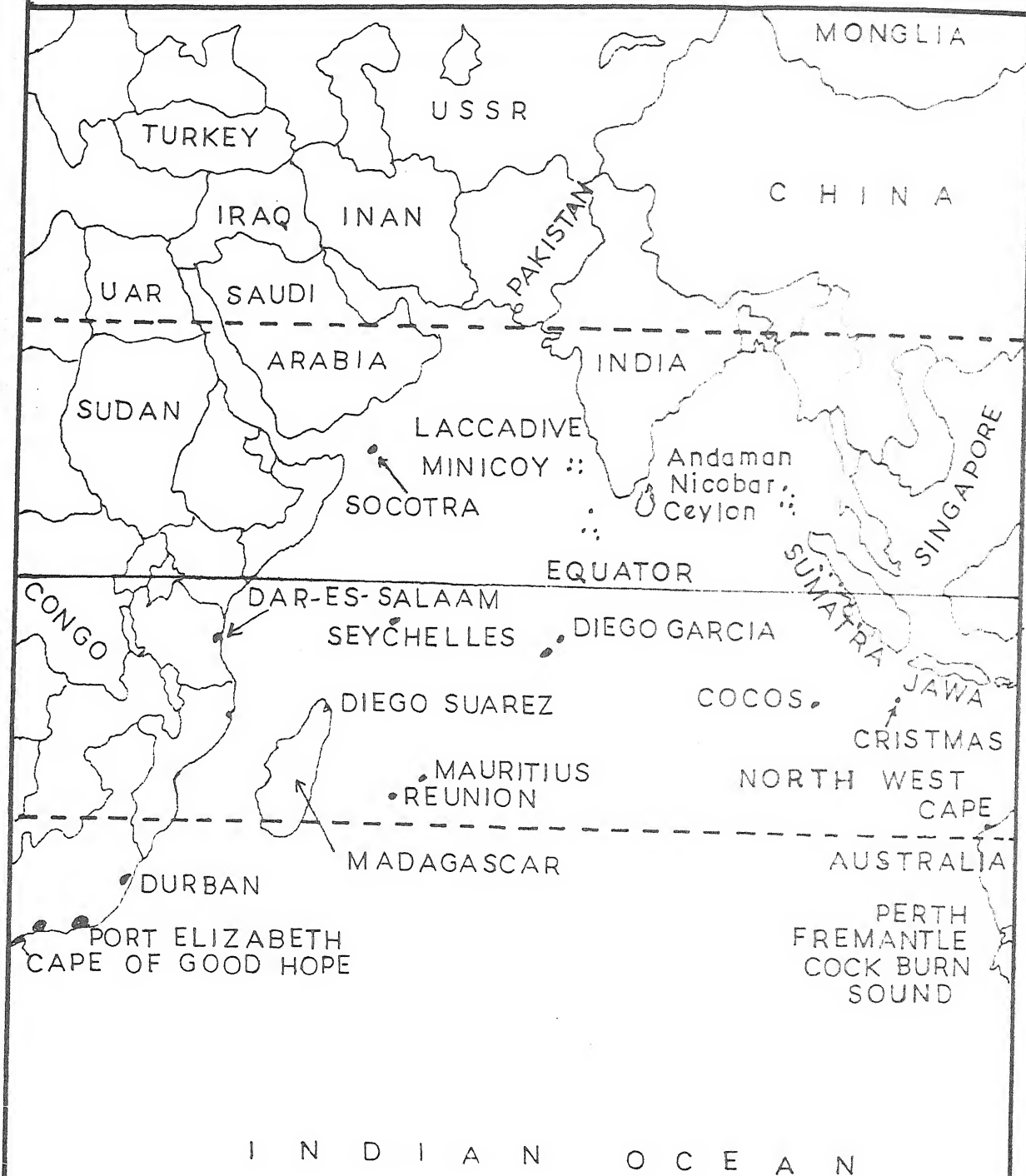
INDIAN OCEAN REGION



I N D I A N O C E A N

Not to Scale

INDIAN OCEAN REGION



Not to Scale

Indo-Pak Coastal Region in the Arabian Sea

The strategic situation in the region of the Arabian sea evolves from the operation of three interrelated factors - 1st the political and military interests of external powers in the region. 2nd asymmetries between the intra-regional littoral/hinterland powers, and 3rd the interaction between political/military interests of external powers and intra-regional asymmetries. It needs further appreciation that the Arabian sea region, in general, falls within the developing world. The majority of these states have a shared colonial experience and were at low stages of economic and technological development on achieving their independence. A strong undercurrent of nationalism influences the political behaviour of the littoral/hinterland states of the Arabian sea in the international system, but they were cognizant of their compulsion to seek external assistance for their programmes of socio-economic reconstruction.

The Arabian sea is a region of low solidarities or community of interests. There are few cooperative links between countries in the region and these are either bilateral or subregional. Co-operative efforts are tried by diversities obtaining within the Arabian sea region. No racial or cultural links bind the area. Religion and political institutions are diverse. They could be exacerbated by external powers seeking to either enhance their strategic interests or diminish the strategic interests of their adversaries in the region.

The current super power rivalry in the Arabian sea has been created by the Anglo-American plan to dominate the sea and influence the political, economic and military course of events in this region. The military presence of the great powers in this sea is an old story. The naval arms race between the two super powers got triggered off from the early 1960s by the advent of FMS and SLEM systems. Upto the end of 1960s, the naval presence of both the super powers in the Arabian sea had remained at a fairly low level but the seventies intensified their rivalry. The beginning was made in 1965.

It is obvious that the Arabian sea will be one of the major problems of the future. The security it has enjoyed for over 150 years (from 1784-1941) has been completely shattered by the events of the last few years. The old conception of this sea as a preserve has to be given up with the major powers developing so near the area. America, China and Russia have started to access the sea, in a manner totally different from what the European nations had in the centuries that followed Vasco da Gama's arrival. Then the nations of Europe alone counted on the sea.

An exclusively land policy of defence for India will in future be nothing short of blindness. Before 1941, Arabian sea was protected British take and Britain was totally responsible for the safety of India, but today the position is different. The partition of India into India and Pakistan, Iran and Iraq war (Sept. 1980), the move of Russian army into Afghanistan in Dec. 79 and the oil of the Gulf have made this Indo-Pak coastal region

more tense and vulnerable. The rivalries among outside powers and the internal confrontation between the neighbouring countries have come in appearance due to their interests and border disputes.

India has vital stakes in the stability and security of the entire subcontinent as it forms a strategic entity. Pakistan is jealous of India being the decisive power proved in Indo-Pak wars (1965 and 1971). It has fears that India has ambitions to dominate its small neighbour. It therefore, sought the establishment of a machinery to settle regional disputes which it considered more serious problems than the presence of great powers naval forces in the region. Once partition in 1947 was agreed to, Indian leaders demanded that there should be only two dominions based on the geographical contiguity factors and wishes of the people concerned. But this formula has not been accepted by Jinnah and his colleagues and Kashmir problem has taken place and confrontation with India at the basis of Kashmir dispute is continued till today.³⁴

Early in the fifties, despite India's pleas, Pakistani leaders brought the cold war into the subcontinent by joining CENTO and SEATO. This was at a time when India had not developed any close relations with the Soviet Union and Pakistan was obtaining arms from the United States to build its forces for an attack on India. Pakistan's value in this region has been enhanced because of China's increased interest in this sea. China has secured access to the Arabian sea at Karachi through the Karakoram highway which was built

34. Bhupendra Singh, Indian Ocean & Regional Security, B.C. Publishers, 9 C Ageet Nagar, Patyala, p. 44.

by them a few years back in collaboration with Pakistan. The sino-US approachment has further added value to Pakistan's role in this region.³⁵ Indian policy was consistent in this respect. In spite of having supported the concept of peace zone, Pakistan shows no eagerness to keep the super power rivalry away from it. It ignores the fact that it has a 960 kms. coastline on this sea, exposing it to the powers that might be having military presence in the sea.³⁶ Its policy is primarily based on its imaginary fear of a naval threat from India. It has, at every opportune moment, been exaggerating this threat and voicing its concern about the smaller countries of the region being the targets of Indian Navy. Pakistan's aim in creating this bogey of fear from India is to get maximum possible military aid from China and U.S.A. Having dumped all sorts of sophisticated weapons including F-16, aircraft tanks, artillery and naval ships; in Pakistan, the U.S.A. now (August 1983) proposes to provide 40 Harpoon missiles having a range of 90 to 110 km and 20 AH - IS attack helicopter gunships, and high explosive warheads with a heavy blast effect and can be extremely damaging to its targets. The supply of Harpoons to Pakistan opens the possibility of a genuine Pakistani attack along the Indian coastline for engaging on-shore and off-shore targets. Vital Indian establishments like the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and the Sagar Samrat offshore oil platform on the Bombay High will become highly vulnerable targets. INS Vikrant will also be constantly under serious threat. These missiles will make the Pakistani Navy capable of interfering with Indian ship

35. Ibid, p. 45.

36. Ibid, p. 45.

movements and blocking its trade sea routes on the Arabian sea. The induction of this weapon in Pak Navy will bring about strategic change in Arabian sea power balance and would dangerously precipitate a new arms race and destabilise the entire region. The process of demilitarization of sea thus has been made nullified and countered all the attempts to make it possible. The US-China-Pakistan Collusion has further intensified the existing rivalries in the sea. This is against India's interests and security.³⁷

The influence of the Arabian sea is far greater for the security of India of than for any other littoral country. Other littoral countries, due to their own domestic problems and size, are not in a position to meet the challenges of the great powers or adversaries in the sea.³⁸ In view of its dominant position in the region, India is the only country which may be able to bring together other nations in an effort to counter super powers. The dangers to peace and security in its immediate neighbourhood and also to the world peace have been the cause of increasing concern to India. Arabian sea has, therefore, assumed a vital importance for India. India has no desire whatsoever of dominating the Arabian sea and converting it into an Indian lake, but must take all necessary and suitable steps to safeguard its own security from any aggression from the sea. U.S. naval build up in the distant southern coast of Arabian sea adds to India's worries. Although the main US object in

37. Ibid, p. 46.

38. Rajendra Singh, *Politics of the Indian Ocean*, Thomson Press India Ltd., Publication Division, p. 128.

this presence is to protect supply of oil from the Gulf it will also enable them to support Pakistan in case of future war between India and Pakistan, there can be a repetition of what US 7th fleet did in 1971 by appearing in the Bay of Bengal, in view of the on the spot presence of US task force in the region. Pakistan is in a position to avail the U.S. naval help at short notice. India can never forget that it was subjugated only after it lost dominance over the Arabian sea and Bay of Bengal both.

In the Indian Mind, Pakistan is identified as an instrument for external intervention in the sub-continent to countervail India. India is not worried of Pakistan but has to worry about the super powers or great powers, the influence or intervention of which Pakistan and other like Iraq, Iran etc. bring into the region. Pakistan has reconciled itself to coexisting in the region with India without being able to claim an artificial parity. Pakistan obsession with parity comes out clearly when its leadership demands mutual force reduction or a joint declaration of nuclear weapons. Pakistan will not make such demands on China because Pakistan has no claim of parity with China.

The outside nations interested in the Arabian sea Indo-Pak coastal region are mainly U.S.A., China, Soviet Union, Britain and other west European nations. They have a number of common as well as varied interests. It may be asserted that the Big powers policy towards the Arabian seas aimed primarily at securing better shore facilities, staging posts, communication bases, and if possible, the use of airfields in the islands or adjoining countries on this coastal border of Arabian sea for land based air support. American naval

demonstration during 1971 Indo-Pak war and the period following the Oct. 1973 Arab-Israel war and the oil crisis led to an enhancement and more or less, permanent presence of American task force in this region of sea. The Iranian crisis and the subsequent events in Iran and Afghanistan led to a further increase in the American naval presence in and around the Persian Gulf and this Region.

The Soviet Union naval presence in the area after 1969 was primarily confined to the Arabian sea. Soviet Union like the U.S.A. sought to strengthen their positions in this region by forming military alliances. Thus deviding the world community of nations into two hostile camps. The bi-polarised region with all its hostility, tension, disputes and suspicion began to build up arsenals, creating an atmosphere of cold war. 1987.

The political tension in this region provided opportunity to the external powers to exploit them to achieve their aims. The internal political instability, inter-state differences, social disequilibrium, accompanied by the technological lag, make the outside interference inevitable. The Military equipments are supplied to Pakistan by U.S.A. on a lavish scale. The Pakistani port of Gwadar is being secretly developed with U.S. backing to take the most sophisticated U.S. vessels and it is also apprehended that the U.S.A. will be able to depend upon Pakistan for facilities, it may extend to them the use of Karachi in event of a global war. A project for improving naval base facilities in Karachi from 1981 is started and along the west of Baluchistan so as to make possible the storage of ammunition, heavy equipment and fuel necessary for transferring

the U.S. RDF to the Gulf area. This would also facilitate direct American aid to Afghan rebels, thus keeping Soviet resources and attention engaged in Afghanistan and away from areas of great interest to the U.S., like Europe. Pakistan could be induced to cooperate if the U.S. undertakes to protect Pak from the consequences of such decision. It appears that Pakistan is likely to be turned into an American aircraft carrier.

Between 1970 and 1972, the Soviets concluded a number of treaties with nations of the Arabian sea littoral states for port and airfield facilities in important strategic points in the region and acquired port facilities in some of them. Soviet bases were strongly established in Iraq and Aden by 1977. Russians are reported to have attempted to obtain a long term base on the island of Gan in the Maldives to counter the activities started by any external power from central zone of Indian Ocean towards this region. Anyhow, the Soviet Navy has succeeded in cutting deeply into the Anglo-American hegemony in this region.

Pakistan is an extremely important entry point for the RDF moving into the Gulf from the East. If U.S.A. succeeds in establishing its naval bases along the Baluchistan coast at Gawadar and in re-establishing its spying facilities at Peshawar, the implications of U.S. naval build-up in this region will be further aggravated. By the end of 1982 President Zia of Pakistan has been desperately keen to set up an independent arms manufacturing base that could serve Arab needs. Pakistan has signed some agreements with Arab countries and the Gulf money is pouring into Pakistan to build up an

effective infrastructure in Baluchistan which is of great strategic importance because of its closeness to the Gulf. Pakistan has close ties with all the six member-countries of the Gulf cooperation council (G.C.C.). Pakistan may become the Gulf defender to the advantage of the U.S.A.

The radical alteration in the balance of power in this region would have been acknowledged by the least notable of observers. Nevertheless, the profound alteration in the global situation by the British loss of the indigenous power that was available to be projected in any direction from a central position in support of her world wide interests. Indian army was now expected to be employed in the regional interests to provide stability in the area. The stability that had been hoped for did not in fact materialise due to stronger nationalistic forces and the withdrawal of British resulted in a vacuum of power in this region of Arabian sea. Immediately following their gaining independence Pakistan confronted India over the future states of the state of Kashmir. This confrontation which has continued unabated has completely neutralised the power left behind by the British on this region. The animosity that developed over Kashmir created unstable conditions finally encouraging China to adopt a belligerent attitude to India and middle in the affairs of the region.

India's failure in 1962 Chinese attack added to China's prestige in the Arabian sea coastal region at the expense of India. Though India's failure was due to her own unpreparedness, the massive

military and naval aid of over one billion dollars that Pakistan had recieved from the U.S. Aprior to Oct. 1962 forced upon India the necessity to maintain forces to counter a dual threat. The armament race currently in progress between India and Pakistan is likely to add to the instability of the region and assist the achievement of China's aims.³⁹ The most important aspect of the situation is that India's inability to act as a stabilising influence in the Afro-Asian world has enabled the Chinese presence to cause instability in it. In terms of the global balance of power this instability is against the interests of both the super powers in common with the nations of the region and is welcome by China whose outepoken aims are to make countries ripe for communist subversion.

The major interest of the western powers in Iran and other Arab states is to maintain the oil supply regularly from the area. Any serious disruption of this supply would alter the balance of world power in any future war sufficiently to make the western position untenable for a protracted conflict. Taking advantage of her religious affinity with the people of the area. Pakistan is making a major effort to replace British and Indian influence and has met with some success with the royalists. While Pakistan's long term aims are to form an Islamic block, she would be satisfied with

39. Ravi Kaul, *India's Strategic Spectrum*, Chanakya Publishing House, Allahabad, p. 38.

loans or grants from the surplus foreign exchange obtained from oil royalties for the purchase of sophisticated defence equipment.

India today has the fourth largest armed forces in the world. The explosion of a nuclear device would give her immediate great power membership with attendant influence in international councils. It will be undoubtedly welcomed by the smaller nations who will have greater freedom to manoeuvre instead of living in constant fear of the dragon. By restoring a balance of power which will in future be maintained by India it will provide a welcome stability to this coastal region and also to the whole continent. Pak and China both have felt some worry about India's this achievement.

The scramble for the natural resources of the Arabian sea and especially the oil resources and uranium reserves in this Indo-Pak coastal region added to its strategic importance. India has become approximately 60 percent independent in oil due to Bombay high reserves and of her quantity required is met with Gulf oil; for their purposes. Pakistan is, for the Soviet Union, strategically as important as India. Because of its armed potential along the frontiers of the littoral states of the Arabian sea and only a few hours away by air from the Arabian sea, the Soviet union is now on the verge of becoming the most powerful Arabian sea hinterland state.⁴⁰ After the Afghanistan occupation, the Indo-Pak coastal

40. A Majeed, Indian Ocean Conflict & Regional Cooperation,

region has become more tense and afraid of due to the aggressive nature of the Soviet policy.

The Soviet union is trying its best to secure a zone of soviet penetration in this region by exploiting the regional instability and a general resentment against the west. Added to this is the advent age that Afghanistan occupation provides to the Soviet union vis-a-vis the Gulf region. The Soviet union is making increasing use of its strategic position and is leaving it to the other side to make itself politically vulnerable through its endeavours to obtain facilities in this region.⁴¹

There was no doubt that Pak has constructed a plant for producing enriched uranium. Pakistani attempts to go nuclear were certainly of a highly enterprising character. India was one of the countries which reacted to the syndrome of the Islamic bomb sharply suspecting that a military regime such as Pakistan was prone to be swayed more by military considerations than political.⁴² And if the bomb did materialise, it was certain India would shed all inhibitions in regard to the building of the device itself. Thus the Indian subcontinent might plunge yet again in the vortex of confrontation. All talk of making the region a de-nuclearised, peaceful area would recieve a final burial.⁴³

41. Ibid, p. 12. =

42. K.R. Chopra, *India & The Indian Ocean*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, p. 155.

43. Ibid, p. 156.

Even though the bomb is being built in Pakistan, particularly into the countries which have financed it heavily. Only an atom bomb could provide the necessary counterweight to this uneven predicament. In this Pakistani process the European and some Afro-Asian countries are busy to provide financial and material help to solve their purposes, imposing a threat on India. The Sino-American collusion and support to Pakistan against India continues. There are distinct possibilities that the two powers might not only help Pakistan make good its losses in military hardware but also strengthen it still further. Such a policy would compel India also to invest more and more in its defence. It might even pose serious challenges to its policy of non-alignment. In return for their support to Pak, the U.S.A. and China hope to obtain facilities which would permit them to operate more freely in this area of Arabian sea and to balance the increasing presence of India in the region. China, which maintains a direct road link with Pakistan through the occupied Kashmir might also seek military advantage against India in the western region.⁴⁴ Such a situation would make it all the more difficult for India to resolve its differences with Pakistan. India is seriously concerned with the grave deterioration in the international situation as well as its impact on this coastal region. A new cold war has developed between the super powers and the foci of tension in the cold war is mostly Arabian sea and Gulf region. Because of this a danger of nuclear war has

44. Rajendra Singh, Politics in the Indian Ocean, p.129.

been created in this region. Therefore, the Indian attempt has been to resist moves to convert Afghanistan into a new cold war issue or a confrontation between Islam and Marxism. The ruling groups of this region have become attractive targets for external intervention and subversion, because by changing a few people at the top or by changing their alignments, foreign policies of countries could easily be changed such as Pakistan and Iran. This change of policies or such a non-structured situation among the nations in this region caught in cold war may easily land the super powers in an escalatory confrontation.

The leaning towards super powers of these countries, militarily for their own national interests than preservation of international or regional peace and security may be proved dangerous for this coastal region.⁴⁵ It is in pursuance of this policy that India had always in the past advocated negotiation, instead of confrontation. Pakistan has become a running sore in India's national life and China has become her ally or friend since 1962 which compelled India to seek treaty alliance with the Soviet Union. It is fact that after 1962, India has become much strong militarily and its security perceptions now extended beyond its geographical frontiers. India has border problems with all the neighbouring states but especially with Pakistan and China.⁴⁶ India felt like an old

45. M.K. Chopra, *India & Indian Ocean*, p. 73.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

man out, isolated without a genuine dependable friend. The scars of defeat by China were still there and Pakistani attacks should no signs of diminishing; here were powers, big as well as small, brow beating India. Then in 1971 India cut the Gordian Knot. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation has been signed. This contained a provision of support in the event of attack.

India was convinced that its old outlook on security, largely focused on the subcontinent, was completely outdated, but returned dramatically when Indo-Pak coastal region has become tense due to oil.⁴⁷ Because India gets over 90% of its imported petroleum from Persian Gulf region linked with this region, hence the critical importance of this region for its industry, common needs and defence. Conflicts in this region are endemic, of which the plight of the Shah of Iran and capturing the thrown by A.P. Khomeini is typical, the intervention in Afghanistan and internal disturbances in Pakistan, caused instant repercussions in India's economy and defence also.⁴⁸ A point directly concerned with India's security perceptions related to the arms build up in the region of which the naval and air components were powerful enough to encite dominance overlooking maritime state.

India has made it quite clear that the Soviet forces must

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leave the Afghanistan and this has been accepted by the Soviet Union itself. But Pakistan remained worried of this and tried to raise the issue of legitimacy of the Govt of Afghanistan. The presence of Soviet forces in Afghanistan has an adverse impact on the security of this region, just as the establishment of naval base at Diego Garcia by U.S.A. But Pak has little credibility in talking about external threat to the region when it had been seeking Chinese help and constructed the Karakoram highway. A hostile Afghanistan under Soviet occupation presented Pakistan with some long-range problems. There is one way of ensuring the security of all the three powers i.e. U.S.A. China and U.S.S.R., out of the subcontinent. Due to heavy arms supply to Pak a active U.S. involvement in the region is going to increase. If the influence of distant U.S.A. is brought into the subcontinent, the neighbouring U.S.S.R. will have to seek to intervene in the affairs of the region and has greater relevance to its security.⁴⁰ The armed strength and naval capability of Pak, India and Iran in general and naval presence of U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. in this region, which is shown in the table, is almost able to change the strategic balance of the region.

India has great stakes in Pakistan's stability and territorial integrity, because if Pak were to break up, or external powers extended their dominance over a part of the region, it would be against Indian interests. These considerations generate very

⁴⁰. List of Strength should be attached.

grave risks in Pak getting into the super powers confrontation, relying on the U.S.A, China and some Islamic countries. Its war with India in 1965, culminating in protracted guerrilla activity and gunfire exchanges across the borders, was essentially an attempt to occupy the whole of Kashmir by force. It did not succeed, but the ambitions were still sustained. These were crushed in 1971 when the east wing broke away but could not be said to have been wiped out totally.⁵⁰ The Simla accord of 1972 was made to envisage normalisation of relations with stress on co-existence. The Pakistan leadership still harped on the settlement of Kashmir issue.⁵¹ Thus the Kashmir issue continued to be the explosive peg. After 1971 came the upheavals in Iran and Afghanistan and Pakistan's strategic value rose in the U.S.A. market. Pak received massive financial assistance.

After 1962 close Sino-Pakistani relations began. China granted substantial military aid to Pakistan. Most important, from China's viewpoint, was the overflight facility which enabled Chinese airlines to operate by the shortest route to the Arabian sea's this region and Europe. To this was added the Karakoram road important for commercial and strategic reasons.

The geopolitical community of interests is largely of anti-India, anti-soviet character, with the attendant risks of shift in

50. K. Subrahmanyam, Indian Security Perspective, ABC Publishing House, p.156.

51. Ibid, p. 156.

the diplomatic fields. Sino-Pakistani mutuality of interests would remain an important factor in the subcontinent's power equation and detente between India and U.S.A. would be considered acceptable perhaps in this connection. Pak connection with CENTO is now history but may be mentioned for record that it had never been a happy with CENTO because it can not do much help to themselves. From Khomeini of Iran Zia learnt how Islamic fundamentalism could be an answer to democratic radicalism. Pakistan's leanings towards the west are a complex phenomenon. But the revolution in Iran has become successful to change all this certainly.⁵²

The picture of this region changes when U.S.A and Soviet Union both operating as super powers in the Arabian sea. The emphasis, strategy and deployment here moves to a different plane. With Diego Garcia as a forward base, U.S. missile submarines could operate easily in the Arabian sea.

The Indian response to Arabian sea developments can be either defensive, limited to strengthening coastal defence or more substantive, whereby the Indian presence will be felt in the Arabian sea. Iran and Pakistan touch the northern fringes of the sea. It occupies a immense geostrategic advantage. It has made special relationships with countries like Mauritius and the Maldives. India is also sensitive about a Chinese presence in this region.⁵³

52. Ibid. P. 156

53. Ibid. P. 157

The nature of issues that India faces in this region however vary considerably with others and it may be relevant to look at them briefly in a separate manner beginning with Arabian sea flank of the Indian peninsula. It has the largest navy in this region, larger than Iran and Pakistan. This force is now being expanded given the new importance of sea power in the Arabian sea. Pakistan has a small coastline from Karachi to the Iranian border that makes the Arabian sea frontage. Even though Pakistan may increase its navy in the coming years, Paks role in Arabian sea developments is likely to be confined to its own vicinity.

The Arabian sea front is of more importance to India than eastern coast for two significant factors - (a) It does not have a physical hold on the area and (b) It could be a possible invasion route. India has not paid adequate attention in the past but today it not only has to provide protection for its coast but also it is to be part of the great scramble for regions of influence in the sea, be more energetic and forceful.

The western coastline of India stretches from the Gulf of the Gulf of Kutch in the north west down the Malabar coast to cape Comorin. There are several important ports and naval establishments including ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Bombay and Cochin where a shipyard is being built. India's own oil route from the Persian Gulf is through the Arabian sea and it has important trading links with middle East states. But all these countries have adversary attributes for India, expressed through solidarity with Pak in times of conflict.

The benefits of this coastline could only be made effective use of if there were a proper naval force to take advantage of the strategic benefits that a coastline has to offer. It is the north western coast of India which is the most sensitive for India, as it is there that it shares with Pakistan and Iran, in a case of conventional attack. In 1971, this was an area of naval action between the Pak and Indian Navies. A future naval conflict between the two countries would be of a more sophisticated nature and with greater destructive possibilities on both sides.⁵⁴ The region is tense because of the Chinese nuclear tests at Lop Nor just north of Kashmir and the Pak approach to get nuclear capability. In India, the peaceful nuclear explosion was handled as part of their overall programme by the scientists at BARC. Pak denounced its PNE and said that there was no difference between PNE and nuclear weapon. While India has always argued that PNE should be distinguished from weapons. They relate to struggle for power conflicts of interests and conflicts of culture and values. Pakistan accepted the legitimacy of the use of nuclear weapons in this region and refused to participate in the non-proliferation Treaty. It can be said that the cult of terrorism today has been sanctified and dogmatized by those nations which espouse nuclear strategy. The internal developments of Afghanistan and Iran have led to a situation in which Afghanistan has lost its buffer status and Iran is very near losing it. From the Indian point of view the Afghan situation represents

54. Op.cit, p.167.

a deterioration in over all security environment. The status of buffer states in the sub continent has been disappeared mostly.⁵⁵ The sub-continent, which has a strategic unity is now subjected to direct rivalry and confrontation among the major powers of the world and regional itself.

In matters of security of this Arabian sea coastal region India and Iran are also in rival positions like as Pakistan. Iran has taken upon itself the role of Pakistan's protector after the defeat of the country in 1971 and there has been stepped up political, military and economic cooperation between the two countries. There have been also a recent attempts at establishing a non-Arab Islamic alliance between Iran, Pak and Turkey. On a regional plane Iran's support to Pak after 1971 is motivated by fear of its own balkanization. The Baluchi independence movement in the Iran bordering Pakistan province of Baluchistan has direct ramifications for Iran.⁵⁶ There are Baluchis living on the Iranian side of the border who along with those in Pakistan have been demanding an independent Baluchistate. Tehran feels that if the Baluchi break from Pakistan they will almost certainly be joined by Kinmen in Iran leading to succession movements in its eastern extremity. Iran has also supported Pakistan on the Pushtu question against Afghanistan (Independent Pakhtunistan demand). India's military and naval predominance in the region also gives Pak a shielding role between

55. R. Gupta, Indian Ocean, P. 77.

56. Ibid. p. 168.

Iran and India which would not be possible if Pakistan ceased to exist as a country or existed in a greatly truncated form. Iran has as a result of these factors poured military and economic aid to Pakistan making it a constant threat to India in this region. Iran has been constantly worried by India's size and potential in the area but can try to move ahead upto or till this region without coming into direct conflict with India.

Iran has ambitions to dominate the Arabian sea nevertheless go against India's interests. It would appear that there is quiet rivalry between Iran and India to maintain naval supremacy in the region.⁵⁷

Soviet Union has made withdraw from Afghanistan after establishing a local government there, but external support to rebel groups in Afghanistan against local government from the territory of Pakistan would, however exacerbate the situation by perpetuating the Soviet presence and lead to an extension of the area of conflict into the South Asian and Gulf regions. Like this the terrorism has to increased and supported by the Pakistan and other external powers in India also. Thus the rebel and terrorist activities in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and India may creat greater tension and instability in this region. Soviet Union has an identity of interests with India on larger globbal issues, her present commitments in Afghanistan are likely to enlarge her interests in the region. Therefore China wants to maintain politic-

57. Ibid, P. 169.

military ties with India neighbours to reduce Soviet-Indo influence in the region.

Iran's relations with U.S.A. were very intimate during Shah regime. The U.S. installed Shah was ousted in 1979 and since then its relations with U.S.A. have become worsening. Iran's Revolutionary Government is anti-Communist.⁵⁸ Its strong economy during Shah regime has received a set-back because of its war with Iraq. It has started thinking not only about the defence of Persian Gulf but also about the defence of its Coast on this Arabian sea region from that time (Iran-Iraq war), because Iraq has friendly relations with Soviet Union (a treaty concluded in 1972) and her ally India. Iran declared that its frontiers were not confined to the Gulf but extended to the Arabian sea and Red sea. Iran may work with Britain and U.S.A. for establishing its influence in the Arabian sea and may once again collaborate with the U.S.A. It has acquired certain facilities of its ships and personnel in Mauritius, these may later be shared with or passed on to the western powers.

In 3 Oct. 1973, the Shah proposed a cooperative scheme in the field of economy, politics and naval for regional states but it is felt by India that his scheme appeared to be directed against U.S.S.R. Many events have taken place in Iran as the seizure of US embassy, ban on arms supplies by U.S.A. and feelings of Islamic nations grouping or Islamic front.

58. Bhupendar Singh, Indian Ocean & Regional Security, p. 38.

India's close ties with Iraq were a primary cause of Iran's hostility towards New Delhi. Indian pilots were training Iraqi airmen to fly and maintain Soviet supplied MIG planes. India's military assistance was seen in the context of bitter conflict between Iran & Iraq over their mutual border on the Shatt-al-Arab waterway and Iran's support for the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq. The several outstanding grievances that the Shah had against Iraq would have been regarded with far less concern were it not for the Iraq-Soviet friendship treaty of 1972 and the subsequent intensification of bilateral ties between Baghdad and New Delhi.⁵⁹ Tehran followed Washington rapprochement with China by recognising the Peking regime. By 1973 the Shah had both exchanged ambassadors with Peking, and reiterated his determination to see Pakistan remain intact. A mutual defence arrangement was worked out between Islamabad and Tehran. India and Iran continue to extend their naval capabilities into the Arabian sea, other points of conflict may arise. The series of accords reached through out the mid- 1970s but remained fruitless.

India was faced with the possibility of war with Pak and/or China, and had a reasonable prospect of defending itself if its investments in weapons and training continued at high levels. The presence of superpowers in the region contributed little or much to India's regional security. The negotiations served as a forum for India's drive for major power status and its desire to isolate

59. Anneschulz, Conflict and Cooperation in the Persian Gulf, p.16.

itself from any future superpower conflict, for Pak efforts to find regional security in the aftermath of its 1971 defeat, and for Iran more ambiguous position as a militarily dependent power with independent ambitions.

The Islamic fundamentalists hoped to build strong armed forces with the latest weapons and strengthen the country. This would also deter any threat from communist emergency to their rule, whilst protecting the free flow of oil through the straits of Hormuz and the Arabian sea and Indian Ocean.

The overthrow of Shah and Ayatollah Khomeini's coming to power in Feb 1979 considerably changed the security role of Iran. He tried to evolve a new power equation with the Soviet Union and ordering the closure of United States. He declared that the safety of oil tankers passing through the straits of Hormuz was no more the responsibility of Iran and the country would not act as the policeman of the Gulf.⁶⁰ This policy defused the Soviet threat to Iran but exaggerated threat was imposed possibly by U.S.A.

Iranian revolution of 1978-79 and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan lacked the U.S.A relations and cited the U.S.S.R. tempo. The killing of U.S.A. ambassador to Afghanistan in early 1979 and capture of U.S. embassy in Tehran in 1979 also intensify Soviet build-up in Afghanistan and leaning of Iran to U.S.S.R. The occupation of US embassy by students belonged to the Iranian Tudeh

60. IDSA, Vol. XII, No. 3, Jan-March 1980, p. 288.

Party had tied down the USA and its allies to Iran in terms of responding to the Afghan development.

The hostile Anti-US attitude of the Post-revolutionary leadership in Iran and USA anxiety to minimise deterioration of their bilateral relations with Iran, provided an ideal cover for the Soviet Union to intensify its build up in Afghanistan.

While Iran and the USA were pre-occupied with evolving a new relationship Afghanistan's other neighbours were also pre-occupied with their domestic affairs - Pakistan with its internal dissent, China with rebuilding its shattered economy and India with its seventh General elections. The objectives for the USSR military intervention in Afghanistan can be many and varied but it was mainly to contain the Afghan insurgency movements.

They also claims that under Afghan-Soviet peace and friendship Treaty. The Afghan Government had invited them but there are many other intentions to the Soviet action, as to gain access to the Soviet action warm waters of the Arabian sea through Pakistan and Iran, to demonstrate to the Islamic fundamentalists in Iran that the USSR disapproves of their exporting the Islamic revolution, to demonstrate other governments in the region and to control the straits of Hormuz.

The Soviet presence in Afghanistan enables them to support insurgency movements by Baluchis and Pakhtoons in both Pakistan and Iran. A concerted attempt is being made by the ruling elites in the Gulf countries to stop further Soviet expansionism, but the

limited military capabilities of these countries make such efforts ineffective. Due to political dissent a potential threat arises to many of the ruling monarchies in the coastal border region of Arabian sea and Persian Gulf affected to each-other.⁶¹ The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in Dec. 1979, gave legitimacy to US efforts to increase their presence in the Gulf and Arabian sea. Because of this, the littoral states of this region felt fear and doubtful about their security and integrity from the superpowers presence and confrontation in this coastal region.

China was in a view that this Soviet intervention would also affected the China's security in other words that the invasion posed a threat to China's security. Beijing's concern for Pak's security is only part of its current strategy.

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61. IDSA, Vol. XII, No. 3, Jan-March 1980, p. 289.

Naval Presence & Interests of Littoral States in the Sea

The Arabian sea came under sharp focus by events that happened in another sphere of the world ocean activity. The super powers rivalry and the confrontation among the inter-regional countries have become historical lesson to the Arabian sea population or generation. Atmospher of instability is always experienced in the region after 1968s. The big powers intervention is errupted in this region of the sea because of their economic, political and strategic interests. The fear of their regular naval presence and terror of their big and technical strength, which is permanently trying to establish in the region, have entered in the regional states or littorals of the Arabian sea. The tension, which is created by the malafied intentions of the pro-western and communist power states of the region to safe their interests, has generated instability in the region and always the clouds of contest could be seen here. Military pacts with external powers and inadequate claims are also the cause of their conflicts. In a way, of course there was nothing abnormal about the contest, for it was worldwide and quite a familiar affair. Due to all these happenings some peace loving nations demanded world attention for converting the region into a zone of peace and demilitarization of the sea. The heavy flow of arms and receiving of mmodern military facilities provided by external powers, is a source of deterrence and terrorism.

It was true that from the viewpoint of war and peace the Arabian sea was strictly speaking no different from other seas. So many external powers had their bloody innings in its vast expanses. But it was also true that conflicts in the region had been few and

far between and mild in dimension and intensity. The more recent history of the region had left a trail of suspicion and fear. The net work of bases, and of influence, presence and dominance, even threat of intervention, conquest and occupation all these have affected the lifelines through the sea, domestic stability and external relations.

Fears caused by big power manoeuvres and by the range and lethality of modern arms spread among all the states with oceanic character. The Arabian sea has been subjected to their trust heavily and the chances are that the threat might be sharp. In this respect all the littoral states are determined to upon the declaration of zone area of peace and enjoined the great powers to halt further escalation of their naval presence in the area and eliminate their bases and naval facilities that existed within it and remove all weapons of mass destruction. In this way they can save their independence by the external threat and get solidarity and integrity of their territories.

Any Sino-Pak collusion and U.S.A.-China-Pak axis, Iran-Pak-Turkey treaty, Iraq-USSR Pact and Indo-Soviet peace treaty can create a state of danger for the littoral states including Iran, Iraq, Pak and India and for the big powers in the Arabian sea.¹ Littoral states of the sea have always reacted about the fear of these big powers naval presence and tension among the littoral states in this region. For this purpose the local powers like India will have to face the task of neutralizing the joint presence of

1. K.R. Chopra, *India & the Indian Ocean*, p. 143.

China and Pakistan the Arabian sea.

Big powers have maneuvered to exploit the dangerous problems of sub-continent and the Gulf Islamic world. These powers rivalry has been intense in the region with respect to the liberation movements and in the field of state relations in the Arabian sea.

Fearing Iraq and the disintegration of Pakistan under Soviet-Indo pressure, Iran has been rapidly expanding its naval forces. The July 1973 coup in Afghanistan and the irredentist 'Pushtunistan' policy of the new regime aimed at Pakistan, automatically aligned Kabul with Moscow and Baghdad against Peking and Islamabad.² An enlarged Afghanistan actually incorporating the Pushtu areas of Pakistan would have access to the sea, however and thereby would presumably be less dependent on the USSR. Moreover, if India could push up to the Indus, it too would have no reason to depend on Moscow, as at present, for support against Pakistan and its allies. Of course, a reconciliation among Pak and India achieve the same effect.

The Arabian sea area was a hot-bed of piracy. Hijacking of the present day version of piracy, despite the fact that it has succeeded in gaining some potential legitimacy because of its association with liberation movements still remains in international meance. Such a thing would create serious pollution problems apart

2. Rajendra Singh, Politics of the Indian Ocean, p. 217.

from the political and economic tensions that might be generated in the sea. Regional coordination in naval patrolling and joint operations directed against smuggling or illegal immigration would go a long way in frust such attempts. It would also ensure free navigation for all commercial vessels and invalidate one of the arguments used by the maritime powers to justify their naval presence in the sea.

The littoral states of the Arabian sea can not be called naval powers. Those states which have a naval arm worth the name, can not comp etc, either in the number of naval vessels or in the degree of sophistication in the weapon system, with any of the major naval powers. But while evaluating the naval capabilities of the small states a few facts should be borne in mind. First, the navies of the big powers are spread all over the world due to strategic considerations, the cold war confrontation and naval commitments. Second, in any major naval confrontation between a big power and a small state, the big power will have to reckon with the cold war politics. Thirdly, the navy of a small state is generally equipped with the weapons of big power origin and not at all of them are outdated. In fact, the navies of many of the Arabian sea littorals are equipped with fairly modern vessels and more are being acquired to suit their particular needs. India, Pakistan and Iran have a sizable naval capacity in the Arabian sea area.

Indian navy is hardly adequate to handle its security problems in the Arabian sea. Iran is building up its naval strength

but it is still in the formative stage. Pakistan will take some time to recover from the losses suffered during the Dec. 1971 conflict. Other littoral states navies are living in infancy stage. Thus no littoral power is in such a strong position as to dominate the Arabian sea.

Many littoral states are fairly well equipped with vessels designed for shore defence and patrolling. Almost all the littoral states have medium and small sized vessels like frigates, corvettes, submarine chasers, torpedo-boats and coastal defence craft. The Iranian navy has 10 hovercraft and India has one hovercraft with its customs department. India and Iran have missile-firing boats and Pakistan is going to acquire them from China.³

Though there is a fairly wide range in the displacement and the armament of these vessels they have been grouped together because their primary function, especially in the context of the small navies of the area, can be broadly generalized as shore defence. None of these can become the nucleus of an ocean fleet. These small states with their small navies can therefore, play a significant role in regional security if they coordinate their activities. In this way they can acquire the capacity to keep their security zone under surveillance, ensure freedom of innocent passage and cooperate in the regional security.

This effort can be supplemented to some extent by their naval air-arms India has a limited naval air capability. It has one air-

3. Ibid. p. 218.

craft carrier, INS Vikrant and now accompanied with Khukari INS Vikrant is basically an anti submarine aircraft carrier, though it was used for shore bombardment in 1971 conflict. It carries 10 Sea Hawks, 4-5 Alizes (ASW) and 2 Alouette III helicopters, dominates the Indian naval air-arm.⁴ India possesses one maritime reconnaissance squadron of super-constellations, but it has no shore-based ASW aircraft, a serious deficiency which India will have to rectify if it has to balance its naval capability in the Arabian Sea.

Pakistan does not possess any naval air-arm but has 4 squadrons of long-range II-28 and B-57B 2 squadrons of Mirage III and several squadrons of Saber-jets, starfighters, MIG-19 and helicopters. Iran does not possess naval-air arm but has a fair capacity to influence the naval activities in the Persian Gulf & Arabian sea. Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Both Yemens have limited naval capabilities.

Thus it can be said clearly that no any littoral of Arabian sea has a capacity either to confront the big powers single handedly, or to influence the politics of the Arabian sea. But the Indian Navy, which probably, is the best-trained local force, at the moment, possessed the capacity to operate a small fleet without jeopardizing its main task of safeguarding the security of its coast and the islands. The fact is that most of the littoral states possess the capacity to keep the sea near their coast under some sort of surveillance. Undoubtedly, each of these littorals

4. Ibid, p. 219

conducts these operations separately.⁵ They jointly can try to reduce the outside pressures against them in the region.

The super powers are still continuing their neo colonial onslaught against these newly independent littoral states of Arabian sea.

To fulfil India's requirement for filling the Vacuum in the area it shall be necessary to strengthen the Indian Navy by the launching of an indigenous construction programme for more rapidly than is currently planned. India continues to have the use of all the trade routes in this sea for the uninterrupted flow of the sinews that feed her industries and also the export of commodities that enable her to continue her imports, our immediate aim should be to achieve a level of maritime power capable of meeting a combination of any two powers whose shores are washed by the Arabian sea.⁶ It will not be possible to exercise control of the western approaches to the Arabian sea by land based maritime aircraft, hence air craft carriers become necessary for this area. India acquired the E-class submarine has a range of 20000 miles which is only marginally suitable for the Arabian sea. Indian naval presence is due to hostile submarine counter tactics and security of the home waters. India has over the years built four shipyards at the Cochin, Goa, Bombay and -----.

5. Ibid, p. 220.

6. Ibid, p. 221.

One specific area of complementarity is that of the maritime regime in the Gulf and the Arabian sea. In the pursuit of the regional security, a major role has been attributed to sea power. In fact, Gulf politics expands into the Arabian sea to the extent that the national security views of the Gulf states and outside powers rely upon maritime strategies. This applies to the regional states especially India and Iran, as it does to the superpowers. Maritime strength contributes to commercial and military power.⁷ Regional states are expanding their fleets accordingly. India through its domestic shipbuilding industry and purchases from the Soviet union and Iran through imports from the united states and Britain likely to Pakistan.

Open shipping lanes are important to the states that are economically dependent upon transit or trade and to those that include naval capabilities in their overall military strategic doctrines. Nuclear deterrence and the oil trade keep the major outside powers among this number. Among the regional powers, both India and Iran have used their navies for offshore bombardments of military targets. Each also plans to move toward acquiring significant civilian shipping fleets. Littoral states demanded that there should be freedom of navigation and the right of innocent passage.

The Soviet union has tested the principle of innocent passage by making shipcalls at all the major regional ports including those in India. Pakistan and Iran and now USA has decided to test

7. Ibid. P. 222

this principle in December 1989.⁸ In 1973, Soviet ships deployed around the strait of Hormuz encouraged the United States to send its aircraft carrier Hancock through Hormuz in an official CENTO exercise.

The impact of the growth of maritime interest in the region is more likely to support the existing regime than any dramatic changes. An attempt by any states to use the strait of Hormuz as a choke point to interrupt shipping, would enlist the opposition of India and Iran, as well as of the outside naval powers.⁹ The Gulf and Arabian sea region are becoming community property even though the community members have their own individual interests in it.

Iran has plans not only to expand its navy but also to construct or enlarge bases at Bandar Abbas, Chah Bahr and Jask for the purpose of dominating strait of Hormuz and the Arabian sea. Naval weapons acquisition programme is continued till today, in other side the Iraq, Oman, Yemen have no meaning in the sense of possessing capable naval wing to support their military penetration capacity. Iran has planned to construct Chah Bahr near Pakistani coast with USA help as the biggest base in the area. Iran with heavier vessels like frigates and destroyers along with anti submarine and maritime reconnaissance aircraft and long range Phan-

8. Ibid. p. 222

9. Ibid. p. 223

tons and Tomcats has got the capacity to operate deep in the Arabian sea. Kuwait and Yemen and Saudi Arabia have no naval capability even to patrol its coast line. Iran alone is a state or littoral in the Gulf who possesses capable naval strength in the region and the Arabian sea. Iran has placed orders for the Spruance class American destroyers of 7800 tonnes, armed with latest electronic anti aircraft, anti-missile and anti-submarine weapon systems with five inch rapid fire gun and torpedoes tubes.¹⁰ It has acquired, 12 French missile boats armed with the Harpoon ship - to ship missiles, 4-6 Lockheed Orion anti-submarine and maritime reconnaissance planes. It has about 200 Cobra gunships. It has 4 destroyers, 4 frigates 12 patrol boats armed with Harpoon missiles and 14 hovercraft besides other smaller vessels. It also has planned to acquire through-deck cruisers, anti submarines helicopters and submarines.¹¹ All these weapons would project Iran as the most powerful naval power in the Arabian sea, which could pose a challenge not only to the local powers but also to the big powers, if they decide to intervene in the area. But besides Iran other Gulf and sea states are also busy in acquiring new weapons for their navies also, if they have naval wing with their military. Most of these littorals are oil-producing states and are expected to take steps to keep their sea-lanes open, so their naval presence is needed and if not they are trying to keep that.

10. Ibid. P. 223

11. Ibid. P. 224.

India wanted to project itself as a local naval power and also till recently, the capabilities of the Indian Navy had not been fully tested but there were no doubts about its capacity to take effective action. India supported the idea of regional economic cooperation, as a better way of preventing the incursions of foreign powers in the area and Pakistan has opposite idea on this against India. The Indian Navy has proved itself capable of fulfilling its task effectively. The Pak naval presence in the area has no meaning to Indian Navy.

India, Pakistan and Iran are the three regional naval powers in the Arabian sea, which have some naval capability. India as well as Iran can raid quickly in the sea. Indian navy raided as far away as Gwadar a Pak port near Iran which is within easy reach of the Iranian Phantoms. Pakistan has surface-to-surface, air launched and submarine-launched Harpoon missiles.¹² It has a high explosive warhead with a heavy blast effect and can be extremely damaging to its targets. Harpoon missile is a sophisticated long-range all weather cruise missile, can be fired from air, surface and underwater. It would be possible to fire it from the torpedo tubes of conventional submarines - a great advantage to Pakistani Navy which will not have to modify the launchers of its Agosta class submarines. These missiles can also be fired from anti submarine launchers of the us Gearing class destroyers two of which

12. Bhupender Singh, Indian Ocean and Regional Security,
P. 45.

Pakistan has already got and one more has been ordered. The missile can also be integrated with Pakistani Navy and Sea king helicopters. The supply of 40 Harpoons to Pak opens the possibility of a genuine Pak attack along the Indian coast line for engaging on shore and offshore targets.¹³ Vital Indian establishments like the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and the Sagar Samrat off-shore oil platform on the Bombay high will become highly vulnerable targets. INS Vikrant will also be under serious threat. These missiles will make the Pakistani Navy capable of interfering with Indian ship movements and blocking its trade sea routes on the Arabian sea. The induction of this weapon in Pakistani Navy will bring about strategic change in Arabian sea power balance and would dangerously precipitate a new arms race and destabilise the entire region.¹⁴ This gives a dimension to the Arabian sea strategy.

The USA has helped Pak to a great extent increasing and strengthening its Navy. Pakistan has got 4 Daphne class French submarines and 5 destroyers and one more ordered. Consequently, there has been a build-up of Pakistan's Navy also in Arabian sea nullifying and countering all the attempts made to demilitarise the sea. The US-China-Pak collusion has further intensified the existing rivalries in the sea.¹⁵ This is against India's interests and security.

13. Bhupendar Singh, Indian Ocean & Regional Security, B.C. Publishers, Patiyala, p. 46.

14. Ibid, p. 46.

15. Ibid, p. 46.

It is however reported that the Pakistan port of Gwadar is being secretly developed with us backing to take the most sophisticated us vessels. It is possible that Karachi may be used in the event of a global war. A project is started in 1981 with the help of us for improving naval base facilities in Karachi and along the coast of Baluchistan. It has 20 AH-1S attack helicopter gunships. It also has in total 31 submarine, one cruiser, 8 destroyers/frigates, 13" Patrol boats more than 60 tons, 5 Patrol boats less than 60 tons, 7 sweepers and 3 support vessels.¹⁶

Kuwait has 2 patrol boats. The Iranian Navy is also growing in strength and sophistication, Iran possessed 7⁵ destroyers, 5 sweepers, escort sweeper, 16 Patrol boats, 4 corvettes, 6 coastal and in-shore mine sweepers, 1 repair ship, one water tanker, one tug, 4 SAAM class frigate which have been equipped with the sea-killer MK2 surface to-surface anti-shipping missiles as well as the sea-cat SAM missiles. It has 14 hovercrafts and ordered to some others. It has planed to buy shore-based anti-submarine aircrafts.¹⁷ The Iranian Navy is being gradually built up as a powerful force, not only for the Gulf but also for the Arabian sea area. It has 8 support vessels also. The naval weapons combined with powerful airforce would enable Iran to play a significant role in the defence of some parts of the Arabian sea. Heavier vessels and

16. K.R. Singh, The Indian Ocean, P. 306.

17. Rajendra Singh, Politics of the Indian Ocean, Thomson Press Press India Ltd. Publication Division, p.142.

long range Phantoms would permit Iran to operate in the Arabian sea. It has possessed an oiler and a water tanker which enable the heavier vessels of the Iranian Navy to operate on the sea for a longer period. Iran has plans to double its Navy in the near future.

It will be interesting to note how the local Arab states and the big powers react in future to Iran's claims to control the Gulf. Iran's army, Navy and air force have been strengthened by Britain and the USA. Iran is a member of CENTO and has close relations with Pakistan which is also a CENTO partner. Till now Iran has been against the presence of any foreign power in the Gulf but there can always be temptations. But USA has maintained a small naval presence at Bahrain after the British withdrawal.

The Iranians have been talking about extending their so-called security perimeter. Iran was more concerned with the security problems arising out of its land confrontation with Iraq. The Iranians made a common cause with Oman to extend their security perimeter beyond the Gulf, deep into the Arabian sea. Iran is keen to have a good understanding with Pakistan and some others, to define the future role of Iran in this area. In this connection, the P.M. Ramgoolam in 1972 said that Mauritius would offer naval facilities to Iran, is a significant. There are possibilities that Iran's increasing military potential, its links with CENTO and the continuing Anglo-American presence in the Gulf and the Arabian sea may not be appreciated, either by the USSR or by

local states like Iraq which are in conflict with Iran.¹⁸ Though Iraq is not a naval power but possess es some capacity for a land confrontation. Iraq has 3 small ex-USSR submarinechasers, 12 P-6 PT boats and about 10 small patrol boats. Now the Iraqi navy accompanied with few fast patrol boats equipped with surface to surface missiles to counter the SAM class frigates acquired by Iran. Iraq however, remained a land force and did not seek to develop its naval wing. The USSR has established naval base at Umm Qasr in Iraq to counter American pressence in Bahrain likely to Arabian sea also. There are boarder disputes between the countries in this area since the retirement of British Empire here.¹⁹ Iran had emerged as the dominant power in the Gulf and in the Arabian sea also in the regime of Shah. It acquired 202 sea cobra AH-1Js armed with TOW missile launchers, 3 Tang class submarines, 12 missile boats armed with Harpoon SSMs, 2 store ships (logistic support ships), 2 supply ships (tanker and dry fr eighter), one fleet replenishment ship and one fleet tanker, 6 P-3 orionplanes, 20 anti submarine warfare (AS W) helicopters and 6 mine-counter-measure helicopters (sikorsky RH-53D). Its newly developing naval/air capability, especially its heavier fighting ships, support vessels, submarines, airtankers, orion planes, and missile boats would have provided Iran with a very powerful force to play a crucial politico-military role in the Arabian sea.

18. Ibid, p. 144 .

19. Ibid, p. 145.

The Iraqi Navy operated 12 PT boats able to seriously threaten the Iranian oil terminal and port or the passage of oil terminal and port or the passage of oil tankers. Iraq has also strengthened its navy considerably. It has obtained 12-14 OSA I/II boats armed with Styse SSMS, 5 mine-sweepers and 4 landing crafts. According to Jane's Fighting ships, Iraq and the USSR signed a treaty in August 1976 which has been kept secret.²⁰ It is reported that, from the naval point of view, it included provisions for the soviet occupation of Umm al - Qasr in return for the provision of 10 missile frigates to Iraq.

Kuwait was a British protectorate till 1961. Although it did not have a navy but it had 13 small patrol craft and 3 landing craft (for looking after off-shore oil rigs) which were operated by the coastguard. During 1973-74, Kuwait placed orders of planes, tanks etc. to strengthen her armed forces and Airforce and also try to give support by a navy to their air/armed forces if necessary in the conflict against her opponents. Therefore it had Vosper fast patrol boats armed with Exocet SSMS. The Kuwaiti navy would graduate from its earlier coastguard role and would have an effective anti-ship capability in the Gulf and the sea.²¹ The UAE Navy, however, continued to be a coastal navy operating small patrol boats. It has strengthened its military capability but the navy continued to be neglected until recently but there were reports that 4 Jaguar-

20. Ibid, p. 145.

21. K.R. Singh, Persian Gulf, p. 53.

class fast patrol boats have been acquired which are equipped with SSMs. Qatar has limited military and sea/air capability in the region. It has 6 large patrol boats and 31 patrol craft in 1978 and ordered for some others.

The most dramatic change was seen in the growth of the navy in Oman. Oman's Navy was composed of some small patrol boats, powered downes and the sultan's yacht in 1972 but now it has acquired 7 Brooke Marine large patrol crafts armed with Exocet SSMs, 2 minesweepers for patrol duty, 4 Vosper patrol boats, 6 small patrol crafts, one logistic support ship (oiler and supply vessel), 3 small landing craft and one training ship. Oman had a fine naval tradition in the past and this might indicate a revival of that tradition getting above packages in the region of Arabian sea. But this shows that the above states except Iran have not have their effective naval presence in the Arabian sea area, though they have tried to show their naval presence in the Gulf effectively.²²

The super powers interventions in the littoral states affairs, Indo-Pak conflict Iran-Iraq conflict, Afghanistan occupation etc. and Iranian revolution will probably dampen the naval arms race in the Arabian sea littoral states to some extent, but this could not be afforded and arms race and naval presence theory is continue due to big powers naval strategy there in the sea to

22. Military balance 1978-79 and SIPRI yearbook 1978) datas from the above Journals.

protect their interests and sovereignty and freedom.²³

The Indian subcontinent occupies a pivotal position in the Arabian sea and the Indian Ocean. This area is rich in minerals, energy and food resources. As the largest state in the region, India is the natural locus for technological, economic and military resources with respect to the small states in the littoral. In addition to the emotional elements affecting Indian security concerns, India's crucial oil links with South-west Asia and its trading routes to the Gulf markets traverse the Arabian sea.²⁴ India always had been remained a maritime nation, there by legitimizing the creation and modernization of a balanced naval fleet. It is argued that while to other countries the Arabian sea is only one of the important oceanic areas, to India. Her life lines are concentrated in that area, her freedom is dependent on the freedom of that water surface. No industrial development, no commercial growth, no stable political structure is possible for her unless her shores are protected.

In view of India's mission as a nation, its maritime interests have been summarized as the protection from threats via the sea to India's independence. India's new capabilities for exploitation of the vast mineral and fish resources of the seabed. India's growing seaborne trade and its particularly heavy reliance

23. K.P. Singh, *Persian Gulf*,

P. 117 & 135.

24. *Asian Security Journal* Vol. XXV, No. 12, Dec. 1985, p. 1190.

and today we find it chunning with danger.²⁷ The increasing pace of militarisation in the Arabian sea and the ocean makes the 3500 miles of our coastline more vulnerable. How can we acquiesce in any theory which tries to justify the threat to our own security environment or condones the existence of foreign bases and cruising fleets?

With such perceptions, the orientation of the Indian Navy itself underwent a serious alteration. The navy is prepared to defend the entire gamut of India's economic and political interests in the Arabian sea littoral. The Govt. of India seemed determined to acquire at least the harbingers of a blue sea capability that would raise the threshold of naval interdiction. In effect a minimal deterrence that might prevent a foreign power from embarking of a course of action inimical to Indian national interests was sought to be created, and hence the Indian Navy was assigned the very important roles of maintaining the dominance of the sea in the event of a conflict with Pakistan and possessing at least a modest minimal deterrence capability that would be capable of showing the flag. In ascending order of ease of execution, these are maritime surveillance of alien navies, presence and show - the flag, minimal deterrence, and power projection.

Maritime surveillance of alien vessels constitutes the most benign and elementary form of assertive naval operations and the

27. Ibid, p. 1192.

Indian Navy's use of its super constellations and IL-38 Mays for the task is premised on the practical consideration that, in the near future, it is beyond its capabilities either to police the sea seriously in a sustained manner or to keep alien navies out of it. In a situation where a more assertive form of naval containment is ruled out from an operational point of view a necessary precondition for undertaking any larger defensive naval maneuvers should conditions warrant.

Presence and show-the-flag missions in the Arabian sea littoral capitalize on the fact that there are large Indian communities in the region and that India has tended to perceive safeguarding their welfare vaguely as part of its extended responsibilities. Such missions constitute visible dimension of the armed situation that characterizes Indian ascendancy and helps underwrite its aspirations as a rising middle power. Consistent with this rationale, Indian Navy ships have made port calls invirtually every country in the Persian Gulf Arabian sea littoral and have participated in occasional joint naval exercises.

Minimal deterrence is the low cost translation of defense of the nations maritime interests.²⁸ whereby the Indian Navy has not sought to develop a force posture that would allow it complete domination at every level of conflict, which would be costly, but instead allows it to convey to a potential adversary that the costs India could extract in any conflict would be so disproportionately

high as to dissuade an opponent from committing naval forces in the first place. In present circumstances, minimal deterrence is an attractive product of both economic and political compulsions²⁹ since 1974. The Indian Navy has consistently ranked first from budget expenditure point of view. The force posture entailed by minimum deterrence allows the Indian Navy to acquire an interdiction capability sufficient ~~as~~ to complicate the ~~xxx~~ naval planning of a potential adversary without permitting it to grow in so gargantuan a fashion as to become a cause for ~~undxx~~ concern to India's neighbours, who are even now suspicious of India's security objectives.

To answer the queries, about the transformation of the area into a area of peace, about a new global order based on peace, justice and the right of self determination of nations, and about the necessities for its own national security with the fears and apprehensions of its smaller neighbours in the littoral who might perceive such forces as threatening and restrictive of their own national independence, the Indian Government proceeds with a program of major naval expansion.³⁰

The seafaring tradition required both nations (India and Pak) for the development and maintenance of requisite naval forces. Currently, the increased concerns relating to the South west Asian

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'are of crisis' and the US-Pakistani strategic consensus arising from the same ensure that naval forces are once again at the forefront of Pakistani strategic thought. Similarly, the Indian concerns relating to the naval competition in the Arabian sea coupled with its own growing political confidence and military resurgence will ensure that there is no looking back where naval forces are concerned. The naval rearmament in the Arabian sea has taken place by both the nations due to mere adversarial competitiveness and adverse voice by the respective leaderships of both countries. Anyone can understand that security is best preserved when each competitor has sufficient forces to guarantee the successful execution of its objectives. The mission of all the navies is identical and thus suggests that numerical asymmetries alone can illuminate shifts in the naval balance of power.³¹ Every nation of the sea want sea control for gaining and maintaining naval supremacy with a view to controlling vital sea areas in order to protect lines of communication and commerce by ensuring local superiority in an area of naval operations. Sea control can be ensured by destroying the navy at sea, by blockading the navy in its bases, by destroying the key installations with naval and air forces.

Pakistani naval strategy is different from the Indian naval strategy of sea control, but rather it might be proposed as a sea control strategy for a navy of modest means & aspirations. It has ambition of naval superiority that is traditionally ascribed to

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India in view of its geography and general pre-dominance.³² The threat to the Indian Navy comes not from massed seapower but from numerous cruise missiles arriving from different directions, ranges, attitudes and speeds in attack. Pakistani Navy always is trying to get a opportunity in a conflict to effect the interdiction of Indian ship movements. Sea denial strategy of Pakistan is more attractive in theory but not in practice.³³

In fact, the Pakistan's naval objectives against India would be to use its cruise missile equipped surface/subsurface forces to deny India use of the Arabian sea in particular, and freedom of naval maneuver in general and in doing so to protect the Pak coastline, territorial waters and its maritime assets and to conduct highly conspicuous attacks against Indian shipping, offshore installations and coastal targets for which its midget submarines are optimized. Pak Navy has no capacity of preventing Indian Navy from using them in tandem in open sea exercise.

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Table 1
Naval Capability of the Arabian sea littoral states

Sl. No.		India Pak.	Iran	Iraq	Kuwait	Yemen	Bahrain	Oman	Qatar	Main- line
1.	Aircraft carrier	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.	Submarines	8	11	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.	Cruiser Missile Boats	16	4	12	10	-	-	-	-	-
4.	Destroyer/Frigates	29	8	13	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Corvette/Patrol Vess.	6	-	4	3	2	1	4	11	1
6.	Patrol boats	12	19	10	38	17	-	3	-	-
7.	Minesweepers	16	7	5	-	3	-	-	-	-
8.	Hovercrafts	-	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.	Support vessels (oiler, supply and repair ships)	7	3	8	-	-	-	2	-	-
10.	Landing crafts	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11.	Patrol Crafts	7	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12.	Aircraft carrier	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13.	US Mission tanker	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
14.	Tarpeda	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15.	Fast attack gun	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16.	TJG	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
17.	Landing craft	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
18.	Coastguard cutter	-	-	order	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source : Indian Ocean by K.P. Singh, Page 305-307.

Table-2

The Naval Air Force Balance of India and Pakistan

Pakistan

India

- 1 ASW/MR Squadron : 3 Attomtic (Exocet)
2 Rotary ASW/ARS Squadrons : 6 Sea King (Exocet), 4 Alouette III

ASW : M-39 Exocet

1 attack squadron : 15 Sea Hawk, 8 Sea Harrier, 2 PRS (2 Training)

1 ASW Squadron : 5 Alize 1050

2 MR Squadrons : 4 Super Constellation, 2 IL 38 - May.

4 Rotary ASW Squadrons : 10 Sea King, 5 Ka-25, 8 Alouette III

1 Rotary SAR Squadron : 10 Alouette III

1 Communication Squadron : 18 Defender

2 Training Squadrons : 6 Kiran, 2 Sea Hawk, 3 Alouette III, 4 Hughes, 269 helicopters.

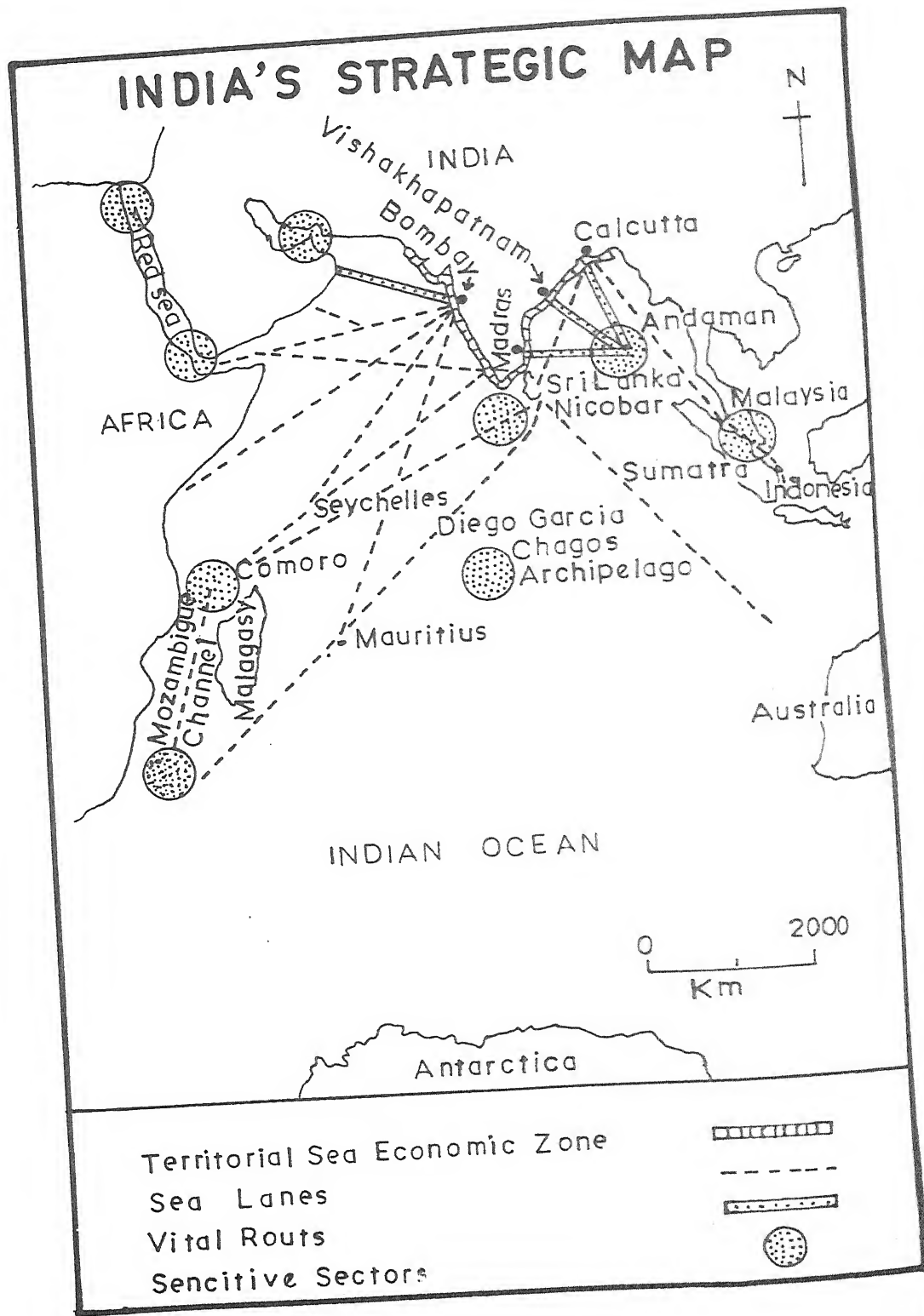
On Order

10 Sea Harrier, MK51, IT60, 3 IL38MR,
12 Sea King MK 42B Sea Eagle SSM Exocet M 39 ASM

Source : The Military Balance, London, International Strategic Studies, 1984-85.

CHAPTER VI

Military Defence of Indias Maritime Interests in the
Arabian Sea



Maritime History

The details of India's connection with the Ocean that bears her name have been covered by eminent historians. Our purpose will be served by dealing with its most salient aspects which highlights the influence of the sea on the history of the sub-continent enabling us to draw conclusions which might assist in formulating India's strategic interests. We shall therefore deal first with an outline history of the region; then discuss events during the last some decades that have contributed to the formation of the vacuum; and finally examine the prospects for filling it in the future.

Hundreds of years before Columbus sailed across the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean specially the Arabian sea was a important waterway for commerce and cultural exchanges between nations as far removed as China in the East and the Mediterranean states in the west. The cities of Babylon and Nineveh had trade relations with the west coast of India. Some of the archaeological remains discovered at Mohan Jodaro in 3000 to 2500 B.C. come from the Red sea area. The oldest evidence of the period 1500 B.C. is in a Mantra from the Rig Veda.¹ 'Do then convey us across the sea for our welfare.' Indian elephants were employed in the Euphrates valley during this period. During the thirteenth century the Malabar rulers controlled the Eastern region of the

1. Ravi Kaul, India's Strategic Spectrum, Chanakya Publishing House-3 Thornhill Road, Allahabad, P. 47.

Arabian sea. Shipping using the Straits was required to call at the capital and the maritime administration regulated traffic through the shipping lanes. After eleventh century the weaknesses of the Hindu Kingdoms paved the way for the establishment of Muslim supremacy in Indian waters during the thirteenth century, thus ending the golden period of Indian maritime history.

It is therefore clearly established that the control of the seas around India untill the thirteenth century was predominantly Indians. This included freedom of navigation in the Arabian sea and the command of the Malacca straits and as a result control of the trade between China & the west. However, complete freedom of trade and navigation was normally allowed and there were few instances of friction of any kind. Both the Arabs and the Chinese crossed the Arabian sea to trade with each other and it was the Arabs who derived tremendous benefit as intermediaries of trade between India & Europe. With the downfall of the Hindu Kingdoms this trade passed completely into hands of the Arabs.

Thus the brightest period of Indian economic prosperity lasted well into the 13th century while the country's maritime activities were unfettered and began to decline immediately, these activities were interfered with. It is no coincidence that this was the most prosperous period in Indian history during which trade and commerce flourished and Indian goods

were in great demand throughout the world. This reputation was fact so high that in an attempt to find a sea route to India the Europeans discovered the America. This prosperity and the greatness that went with it was bound up with its commerce and that commerce depended largely on its maritime activities which in turn depended for their sustenance on maritime strength. The Indian example is not a instance of a country's prosperity being dependant on maritime activity, but the England, Holland, Dutch and Portugal are the countries, get prosperity through their effective maritime activities, or due to her shipping continuously plying the oceans and the numerous tranquil inland waterways. England and Holland had thousands of ships spread all over the world carrying merchandise which they sold at enormous profit. The resulting wealth enabled them to maintain strong Navies which in turn supported their quest for empire in somany countries as well as in India also. Like this the Arabs and the other coastal states of Arabian sea are wanting to get prosperity with the supported Naval Commerce and trade depending upon the Arabian sea routes linked with Gulf, Red sea & Suez canal etc. and give facilities of trading with Europe, North West Asia and other countries.

We would do well to remember the vital lessons that maritime history has to teach us, living as we do on land and hence being more concerned with events connected with it to the detriment of our understanding of the events at sea which have

profoundly affected the course of world history.

The first successful European attempt to reach India was made when Vasco da Gama reached Calicut in May, 1498. The context for possession and control of the seas around India was waged almost continuously throughout the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries until England established complete control after her decisive victory over the french as far away as at Trafalgar in 1805, converting the Ocean into a British lake.

The future of the area is of vital concern to India because of the Suez Canal. Any event that affects the future of this Canal affects the economic development of India. Approximately 70% of India's trade flows through the Suez Canal. Apart from the delay of three to four weeks in arrivals and departures it may cost the country Rs. 25 to 30 crores annually in additional freight rates.

The Arab-Israeli conflict of 1967 once again illustrated the importance of the Canal to India. The increase in freight rates had an adverse effect on the countries developing economy. The maintenance of an open water way across the isthmus of Suez must remain one of the pillars on which the foundation of India's international policy must be based.

The upsurge of nationalism in the area resulted in the gradual withdrawal of the British culminating in their relinquishing power in Aden, which commands the entrance to the Red

sea, to the new Republic of south Yemen. During the British withdrawal Pakistan has been making a strong bid to replace British influence in the area by establishing a Muslim bloc. There is an ever present danger that these oil rich states which excessive foreign exchange holdings are liable to be manipulated by interested powers. Pakistan has recently had some success in obtaining some of this foreign exchange for the purchase of sophisticated defence equipment. Should she achieve any success in persuading the countries of the area to deny India essential oil requirements during a period of hostilities such a development would be most inimical to the country's interests while in the long run India might achieve self-sufficiency in crude oil, for at least another decade or so she will remain dependent on this region for her requirements of this vital commodity.

The Cardinal importance of the maintenance of Anglo-American oil interests to the West have resulted in Britain selling sophisticated air defence equipment to Saudi Arabia and warships to Iran, while United States is also selling Phantom aircraft to Iran. There is little doubt that this unnecessary addition to the strength of the royalists will be countered by the Soviet Union strengthening their opponents.

India demands careful consideration of the effects of the recent strengthening of ties between Pakistan and Iran, which became noticeable during the Indo-Pak conflict of Sept.

1965. Apart from the acquisition of sophisticated ships and aircraft, Iran has been involved in the routing of large numbers of surplus F 86 aircraft from Europe to Pakistan whose final destination has not been ascertained. India's dependence on Persian crude to feed her oil refineries is still considerable and alternative sources until we become self-sufficient need investigation. Relations between Iran and Pakistan have more recently become cool owing to a clash of interest between them in West Asia.

Coming now to the Indian sub-continent we find that Pakistan has short coastline on the western side of India. Lying as this do at the northern extremities of the Arabian sea they are most disadvantageously situated in narrow neck making Pakistani access to the major trade routes difficult during periods of hostilities, should India care to take advantage of this aspect of the situation. On the other hand, should she adopt a weak-kneed attitude, this area with bases at Karachi, could be employed by Pakistan, in collusion with China or independently to stifle India's foreign trade:

The most prominent feature of this sea gives a South - West Asia and India a concave shape which is most favourable feature for maritime activities. This shape gives India a facility of controlling of the important trade routes, except those in the extreme southward, could be exercised by the allocation of minimal resources which would reap benefits out of

all proportion to the effort expended. It would indeed be foolish not to maintain this option for it is an option which would simultaneously impress both our friends and foes alike; provide security for our foreign trade; and deter ambitious neighbours from embarking on unpremeditated ventures without due consideration. Indeed, India is strong enough to project power into the western reaches of the Arabian sea could split the world in two. This is due to the strategic importance of her location on the globe.

A major Trade routes from the Persian Gulf and the Red sea to south East Asia and beyond passes through the Arabian sea. Therefore the Arabian sea is most important for Indian security and dangerous for defence. Some of the islands in or around the Arabian sea are more important because of India's dependence on maritime trade any of these islands falling into unfriendly hands would seriously jeopardize our war potential in any protracted conflict. In this view India has given help to Mauritius. The Suez-Aden-Colombo route is the most heavily travelled. One hundred million tons of Cargo passing through annually.² These narrow waters may be avoided only at great expense and loss of time.

The Power relationships in the Afro-Asian region will be predominantly based on maritime power. We must therefore

now examine the power that is being developed in the Arabian sea region by various nations. The cold war has played a significant part in the development of the navies of the countries bordering the Arabian sea. Thus Pakistan has a navy consisting of ----- Cruiser, ----- submarines and half a dozen frigates and destroyers largely supported by United states funds till today - Pakistan has acquired 3 Daphne class submarines from the French and two or three W class submarines from China.³

Iran has acquired 4 modern destroyers and one refitted ship from Britain and earlier has gotten enough naval support and equipments from America. In view of the recent complicity of Iran in the F 86 aircraft supply to Pakistan we should not be surprised if these ships are funnelled to Pakistan. India can not afford to discount the consequences of these acquisitions when weighing the balance of power in the Arabian sea area.

The emergence of an aggressive communist state in China and its concentration on building up its submarine arm will enable her to project her sea power into the Arabian sea in the future. If China is offered bases to operate from by countries hostile to us it might prove to be a severe blow against our vital interests by enabling many more submarines to operate in the Arabian sea because naval warfare can not be fought by surface and air maritime forces. It would be advisable for the

3. Ibid, P. 61.

Chinese not to attempt to interfere with the flow of trade in the Arabian sea as she is likely to lose more than India, provided we are not fettered by political considerations should the Chinese attempt to employ their submarines in this sea.

The Chinese attack of India in Oct. 1962, is likely to have a profound effect on the future of the region. The event on the has forced the country to face northwards and has diverted its attention from the sea, upon which its livelihood and prosperity depend we must bear in mind that up to the 13th century, when India was making full use of this sea for purposes of trade and commerce we were a prosperous nation. When the control declined and trade passed into the hands of foreigners, the country became progressively poorer. The vital need to export and thus sustain our industries through imports will be a continuous requirement as will the use of this sea for their free and unmolested passage.

There is a considerable power pressure in the Arabian sea covering the western boundary of India. In this area India owing a important strategical position due to power vacuum. A favourable geographical situation is a great asset in the projection of power, power itself is today based primarily on technological achievement. India's Industrial capacity and technological capability will soon be able to meet most of the demands that may be placed upon them to provide the instruments of power

necessary to fill the vacuum. Inspite of all these factors and most expansive wars with Pakistan and China,

Apart from the use of this sea for trade and the fishing industry, modern science has made possible the extraction of large quantities of oil and fertilizer and through the science of oceanography is investigating the possibilities of opening up many new vistas which have remained buried in the deep for centuries. The exploitation of the wealth in the Arabian sea is a possibility India could ill afford to overlook. The rapid expending merchant fleet, which is an important element of maritime power, will require the protection of a much larger naval force than we currently possess. We must become independent in shipbuilding industry. India has become capable to design her own warships by own architects with indigenous machinery and weapon system. The basic requirement is for India to build up her maritime strength, which includes its land and air components.

In Indo-Pak war 1965 and 1971, the Indians must have wondered what the Navy has done with the help of Army and Air Force staking everything in the defence of the country. The war at sea is for the most part slow, silent and unrewarding. Most of our ships were at sea during the Indo-Pak war controlling 'certain areas in Arabian sea coast line while denying them to the enemy to ensure that she does not use it further. Hence the navy's task in the conflict was to ensure the un-

interrupted flow of merchant shipping to and from India ports. The Pakistan Navy did not challenge the control of India's major trade routes. They, however, did carry out a sneak raid on Dwarka on the Kathiawar coast which is the part of India adjacent to the Pakistan port of Karanchi. There can be no doubt that the Bombardment created in immediate psychological stir but was of no value as far as the war effort was concerned apart from the press. In war, it is pointless to waste one's resources in attacks on the civil population, destruction of the enemy war potential counts in the attacks. India has the naval superiority at sea to deter Pakistan from initiating a costly war and when the land forces of the country were locked in combat the Navy has plans to assist in the overall strategy to defeat the enemy in the west.

Our aim is to achieve a level of maritime power capability to meet the powers whose shores are washed by the Arabian sea and others by launching of an indigenous construction programme. This means that we must build a Navy capable of dealing simultaneously with the maritime threats from Pakistan and Iran bordering this sea.

The Indian fleet must have a capability of controlling the waters of the Arabian sea, when required for her own use or deny their use to her enemies in the future. This will require different types of ships, aircraft and submarines to make our maritime power and controlling of sea. It will not be

possible to exercise control of the western approaches to the Arabian sea by land based maritime aircraft for many years to come. Hence new weapon system become necessary for these areas. Support ships, Patrol craft, Amphibious forces and devices are important requirements which must also be met if the nation's interests are to be safeguarded.

Broadly speaking, that this is the bases harbours and ports on which we should attempt to build the strong maritime power to face the problems and threats in the sea. In this regard we now have adequate perfect harbours ports and bases in the Arabian sea to meet any challenge from enemy side Goa on the west coast and an airfield in the Laccadives have the ability to sur-Veillance of two hundred miles westward and thus make life more uncomfortable for our prospective enemies.

No nation has permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent interests. Our interests demand that we assemble sufficient power to fill the vacuum before some other country or group of powers whose interests are inimical to ours are able to do so.

Our maritime history also reveals that the Europeans exercised their dominance by firmly controlling the waters around India and the gate ways, thereto. They realised that the Bulk of the world's commerce and trade was carried on via the sea and that the sanctity of the sea routes had therefore

to be preserved. The lack of any base outside India and on offshore island territories deprived the Indians of defence in depth, whereas the British concentrated on securing every strategic island territory that would give them any advantage. These island base in the hands of alien powers would have been a constant threat to them.⁴ If the control of the Arabian sea is again disputed, India will be no more safe.

During the early days of the British in Indian waters, the East India company armed some trading vessels for use as a protection force against attacks on its Cargo ships. This force evolved into the Indian Marine, later called the Bombay Marine. When British colonial power was established in the Indian sub-continent, the force underwent some transformation and, with the dawn of the 20th century, its role became essentially that of a trooping and hydrographic survey service, called the Royal Indian Marine. The officers and key personnel were British and the other staff were Indians, recruited mainly from the north Konkan coastal belt.⁵

The Royal Indian Marine participated in the I W.W., during which time it expanded; after the war it suffered severe

4. S. N. Kohli, Sea Power & The Indian Ocean, P. 11.

5. Ibid, P. 15.

severe retrenchment as a measure of economy. The maritime defence of India was then entrusted to the British Navy, who maintained an East Indies fleet. This absolute reliance on the British Navy sorely deprived Indians of the opportunity to gain modern seafaring experience. ~~However,~~

However, prominent Indians decried their enforced subservience to the British and pressed for the creation of an independent naval force, ~~that~~ manned primarily by Indians. The Government of India relented somewhat and acting on the recommendations of the Rawlinson Committee, decided to introduce a small combatant force which, in time, became the Royal Indian Navy, with Headquarters at Bombay. The Royal Indian Navy took the responsibility of local naval defence and maintained a squadron of six escort vessels, which could cooperate with the British Navy. This was the small beginning that set the stage for India's subsequent naval development.⁶

The II W.W. which erupted in 1939 saw a rapid expansion of the Royal Indian Navy. The Chatfield committee had recommended ~~it~~ that suitable merchant ships be converted into war vessels to augment India's naval defence. This was quickly implemented. Simultaneously, some new naval training centres were established. Before 1934, the Royal Indian Navy was

6. Ibid, P. 15.

officered entirely by the British, whilst the sailors were recruited mostly from the seafaring communities of the Konkan coast. They were good seamen, but their educational attainments were negligible. With the heavy demands of the war and the introduction of more sophisticated armament and equipment, it became necessary to widen the recruitment base.

The compulsions of the II W.W. certainly played a large part in the growth of the Royal Indian Navy and the process of Indianisation. Since war provided the most realistic school for training, an extraordinarily large body of Indian officers and sailors was able to rapidly gain naval experience.

After the partition of India in 1947, the Royal Indian Navy was also shared in the ratio of 60:40. The Naval training establishments located at Karanchi, became Pakistani property and the Indian Navy had the arduous task of setting up training facilities from scratch.

When India became a republic, the Royal Indian Navy became the Indian Navy. India pursued a policy of countrywide recruitment to the Navy, whose homogeneity moved P.M. Nehru to once remark : "India's Navy is a microcosm of what I beleive India should be a community living together in amity and friendship, irrespective of caste, creed of region."⁷

7. Ibid, P. 17;

After Independence, most of the British officers of the Royal Indian Navy chose to leave, and India had to obtain some senior officers on loan from the British Navy for some years. These officers helped to lay the foundations of a modern Navy and to spread a greater consciousness of the Navy's role and importance, before the Government.

By the end of the fifties, the Indian Navy was able to acquire the cruiser Delhi, the destroyer Rajput, Ranjit, and Rana, the Hunt Class destroyer Godavari, Gamati and Ganga, the Cruiser Mysore and the aircraft carrier Vikrant. Thus the Indian Officers and sailors have become a master in the techniques of operating a fleet.

In the process of modernisation of Navy the Government placed orders in the U.K. for type 12 anti-submarines frigates type 14 anti-submarine frigates. These were the modern ships being build for the Royal Navy. After that so many developments have been made in increasing the strength, capability and attacking power by improving ports and harbours designs, and purchasing and building new devices and weapon systems, and techniques, and establishing training centres, and enovating consciousness, ecooperative activities and morale etc. Due to this Indian Navy has proved a superior Naval force in the world nowadays or till to day.

The Sea Power Concept

A power which dominates the sea has decisive advantages over its rivals. It can control the maritime trade, which is becoming more and more important. It can easily transport its army to fight in any area and thus dominate even the littoral, because the means of communication over the high seas, even today, are much superior to, and faster than, those available overland. It can use its navy for blockade, for shore bombardment and for landing troops and material at a given point and time, and thus threaten its rivals. If pressed it can even retreat into the high seas and be sure that its forces will not be totally annihilated. These advantages, which are valid even today, when sea power has to compete with air power, were even more valuable two centuries ago, when the military strategists were studying the concept of sea power and its place in the global or regional strategy.

Several theories were propounded on the need to dominate the oceans and seas. One of the first persons who popularized the concept of sea power was Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914). He wrote several books to highlight the need to control the high seas. There is no doubt that Mahan theory had a great influence upon the evolution of naval strategy, even today his basic presumptions are valid, despite the fact that the navy has to face a serious challenge from the air force and from the missile system. Control of the waves and the waters beneath

them, is all the more important today, in the context of the sophisticated weapon system, like the nuclear-powered submarine. Capable of launching a medium or long range ballistic or cruise missile even when submerged. This new weapon system in combination with the traditional vessels, permits the navy of a big power not only to command the waves and the seas beneath, but also increases the range of its armament from the high seas to any place on the earth. Thus, the navy can truly play a strategic role which is global in the real sense.

The significance of the Ocean strategy alone is not sufficient to understand fully the present day cold war confrontation and its effects upon a given area. The whole thing has to be studied in the context of four basic points : evolution of the weapon system, strategy based upon the available weapon system, diplomatic moves made by the big powers to accommodate their weapon system and their global strategy in a given area, and the local responses to the big power presence.⁸ This is beside the traditional conventional - interventionist role of the navy.

Till the II W.W., Oceans and seas played a limited role in the strategic considerations of the big powers. The conventional naval weapon system, then available to the military

8. Rajendra Singh, Politics of the Indian Ocean, P. 10.

planners, made it possible for a marine power to deny the use of the high seas to its rival, but a true land power could still survive and fight back. The evolution of the air power (long range strategic bombers and fighters which have the capacity to dominate the air space) posed serious challenges to the concept of naval supremacy. The concept of air power gained pre-eminence during the II W.W. It seemed that air power, in coordination with nuclear weapons, would make the concept of sea power redundant. For some time, even a strong naval power like the USA, began to rely more & more upon its strategic Air Command (SAC) and ground forces, to deter its potential enemy, the USSR. That was due to two main factors: firstly, during the II. W.W. the new strategic weapon system atom bomb dropped from an aircraft-was relied upon to provide the main strategic deterrence. The navy was assigned the traditional task of maintaining control over the high seas, and thus providing facilities for the deployment of the western forces on the periphery of the USSR and China. The big powers made several modifications in their weapon systems at that time to attain greater sophistications.

The USA was busy devising ways and means which would retain the advantage of the new weapon system based upon long-range missiles armed with nuclear weapons, and yet evade Counter-attacks by inding the weapon platform. The sea, which had been more or less neglected for over a decade, became important

once again. A new weapon system was devised, which would enable those missiles to be launched from platforms which could be fixed on naval vessels. Attempts were made to enable the conventional surface ships to launch the cruise missile like the Regulators, but they were not considered safe enough. The missiles were placed in submarines which could hide deep under the waves. Nuclear powered submarines capable of firing, even when submerged, long-range missiles armed with nuclear weapons heralded the optimum point in the weapon system which could be used as a major strategic deterrent. The control of the high seas became, once again, a matter of crucial importance in the context of the strategy of the big powers. Western and Eastern bloc countries had made pacts to strengthen their powers. The USA also signed bilateral mutual defence agreements with several countries, which enable to USA to maintain its bases there. With the perfection of the inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) and the threat of massive nuclear deterrence, the emphasis upon the SAC bomber bases was gradually reduce. Several of these bases were closed during the 1960s.⁹ There was also a comparative reduction in the number of ground forces stationed in Europe and Asia. During that period the Navy played only a limited strategic role. But with the introduction of the new weapon system based upon the SLBM, since 1962, the navy has been assigned the most important strategic role. Protection

9. Ibid, P. 11.

of nuclear submarines, the problem of their communication system and counter measures against a similar weapon system, employed by the enemy, govern the strategic considerations of the big powers now, and will continue to govern them till a new weapon system replaces the present one. Now, the countries are not based upon the bombers of the ICBM for the purpose of strategic deterrence.

The weapon systems which have developed and the strategy which has changed to suit them, have had an impact upon the Arabian sea also. But the danger point was not this area but was located in Europe. Asia and especially the Arabian sea area, was considered at that time to be a low priority area. Neither USA nor the USSR had the capacity to start and sustain a major confrontation in this area at the time. By the middle of 1950s the USA decided to extend its system of bases to the Afro-Asian world also, because USA had no SAC bases either in Iran or in Pakistan. The importance of the area, however, increased greatly after the possibility of the deployment of the Polaris submarines in the Indian Ocean area by the USA. That did not mean that the littoral became important as a land base against the Soviet Union. It had only a limited value in that sense. But the control of the littoral became important to ensure a trouble free functioning of the new weapon system which was being deployed in the Arabian sea. By implication it meant that the Arabian sea area should be kept free from the

American SLBM programme, like the Polaris submarines, should provide communication facilities, without which these submarines can not operate properly and should be free from any hostile power which would seek to limit the American and his allies naval activities in the area.

The confrontation between the Super powers on the land and at the sea also involved them in regional politics, with the result that the fall-out of the cold war affected the littoral states in the Arabian sea area as well. The policy of non-alignment, which sought away out of that dilemma, failed to win support from many of the littoral states. The USA in its bid to win over local powers, pumped economic and military aid in the areas of its influence, thus creating mini-cold wars in the region. The Soviet Union also developed friendly ties with several states in the area. Thus the Arabian sea area which was free from the super power rivalry in the first half of the 1950s, was subsequently dominated by it.¹⁰ Since the regional tensions are linked with the super power rivalry in the area, which in is influenced by the weapon systems and the strategy based upon them, their crisis-management would become increasingly difficult, since the area is going to be more and more important for the super powers and the big powers, in their future global strategy.

10. Ibid, P. 13.

The change-over, from the land-based strategy to an ocean based strategy, brought about a detente on the land to some extent in Asia and fully in Europe. But whereas the European detente might be more lasting, the detente in Asia has proved to be illusory. Europe is getting united and is strong, economically & militarily, to pose as a third force. The Arabian sea littoral is weak and divided. The new weapon system, the super power confrontation has moved from the land to the sea, an area with no clear territorial demarcation, and, therefore, is likely to pose more problems to those who are situated on its littoral. The Arabian sea thus becomes involved in the super power confrontation, based upon a weapon system which ipso facto demands control of the high seas for its effective utilization. The confrontation, which started after the system was perfected, will continue until a new system is evolved which seas redundant, unless the littoral states succeed in making the area a peace zone.

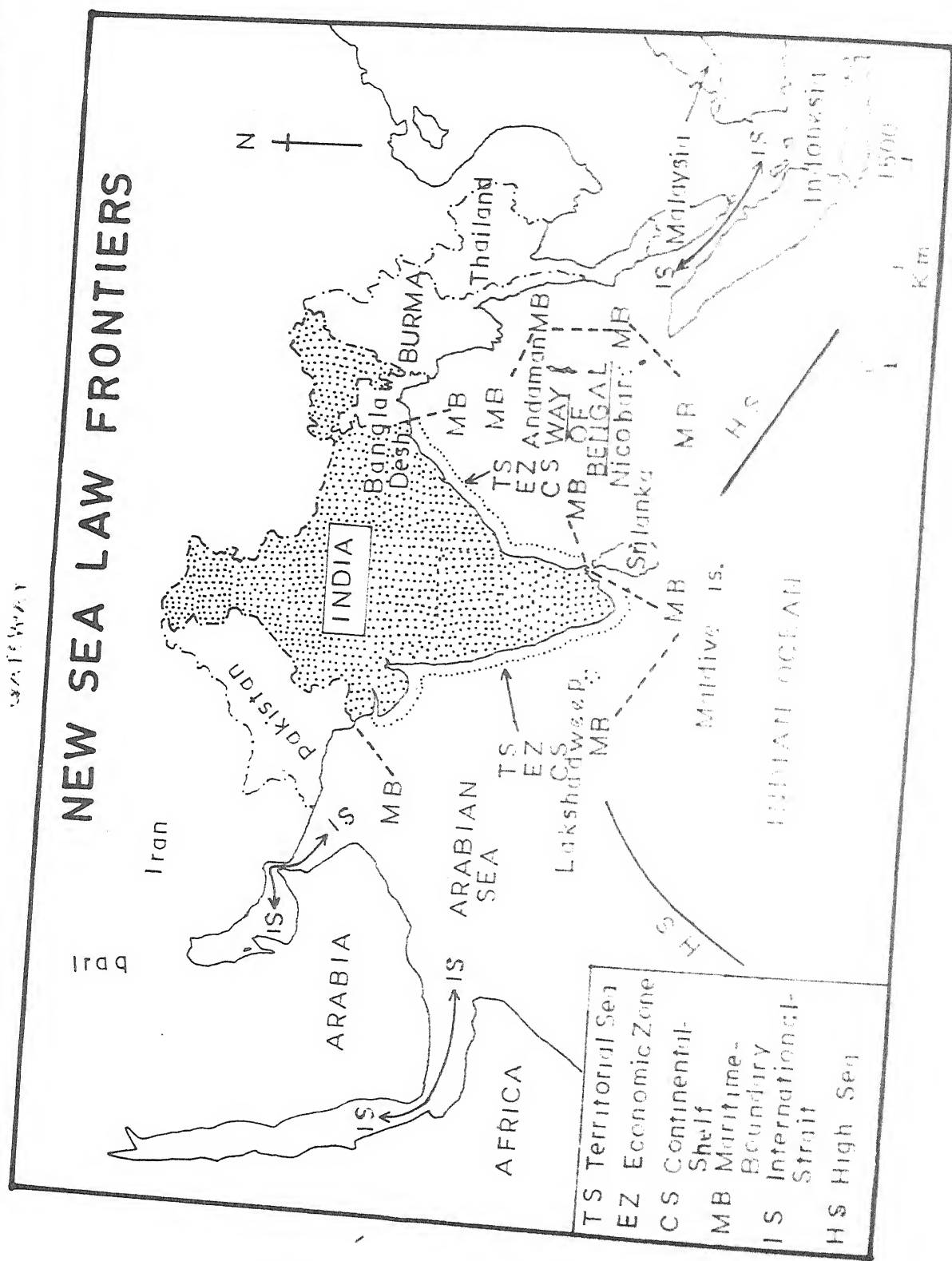
Mahan lists a people's tendency for seafaring as an important ingredient of sea power. India is not only peopled with 'born sailors' along her coast but as we know today, those from inland areas have proved to be equally good seafarers during peace and war. There is therefore no dearth of 'manpower' for seapower and the superstitions about crossing the seas, which were prevalent in some parts of the country in bygone days, no longer hinder the nurturing of a large community with a yen for seafaring.

Mahan's use of the word 'commerce' conjures up a picture of not only an instinct for trade but also its infra-structure—well developed ports and harbours efficiently linked with the centres of production and distribution; ships of trade to suit every type of cargo; shipbuilding and ship-repairing industries; adequate and efficient navigational aids to the mariner; the financial apparatus to support commerce, such as banking, insurance, and such other facilities; and a skilled people to function effectively in this milieu.

Regulations of Marine Transportation

The 1958 Geneva Conventions codified a number of provisions that applied to marine transportation and thus became international law. The convention on the territorial sea provides that merchant ships have a right of innocent passage through the territorial sea of other states. Passage is defined as navigation through the territorial sea for the purpose either of traversing that area without entering internal waters or of making for the high seas from internal waters.¹¹ It is considered innocent as long as it is not prejudicial to the peace, good order, or security of coastal state. The coastal state

11. Luc Cuyver, *Ocean Users & their Regulation*,
P. 120.



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11. Luc Cuyvers, *Ocean Users & their Regulation*,
P. 120.

is also given a number of rights : it may require compliance with national regulations in the territorial sea and it can take the necessary steps to prevent passage that is not innocent. There is still some controversy on the latter subject, however, particularly with respect to the passage of foreign warships.

The Geneva convention on the high seas codified the principle of freedom of navigation. As a consequence, the high seas are beyond the control and responsibility of any one state, and it has been necessary to develop an additional body of law to regulate particular aspects of navigation in these waters.

The high seas convention also deals with the legal connection between ships and the countries in which they are registered. Generally, the flag state retains exclusive jurisdiction over its vessels on the high seas and to a lesser extent when the ship is in the territorial sea of another country. As a result, a ship is never beyond the reach of law since the flag state can exercise jurisdiction over it to prevent unacceptable conduct. The convention further obliges states to ensure compliance with the international navigation regulations. However, as noted earlier this obligation is not always undertaken by a number of flag of convenience countries.

The rules codified by the 1958 conventions were in them-

selves not enough to deal with the many problems of marine transportation. There was need for measures to prevent collisions or to deal with other safety matters to employment.

The principal marine safety agreement is the 1974 International convention for the safety of Life at sea (the SOLAS convention), which is 1980 superseded a 1960 convention of the same name.¹² That convention is a set of regulations on construction, life saving appliances, radio communication, the safety of navigation, and the carriage of dangerous goods. These regulations are applicable to the ships registered in the countries that ratified the agreement.

International Maritime organisation also administers a set of traffic regulations aimed at preventing collisions at sea. The regulations to the 1960 SOLAS convention established common standards for lights, signals, and maneuvers. They applied to all vessels on the high seas or in navigable waters, other than ports and certain inland bodies of water. After failure of previous regulations a set of rules on the use of radar and to require compliance with traffic separation schemes a series of separated traffic lanes IMO had recommended in heavily trafficked areas. Many vessels ignored the traffic separation schemes, sometimes with tragic results. To prevent such occurrences, IMO in 1972 convened a diplomatic conference

12. Ibid, p. 121.

in London which produced the convention on the international Regulations for Preventing Collisions at sea, also called the collision Regulations or simply COLREG.¹³ This agreement went into force in July 1977, making the use of traffic separation schemes compulsory. This does not mean that everyone is obediently following the schemes. Violations, in fact, occur every day but, as is the case in practically the entire body of international navigation law, only the flag state has jurisdiction over them, unless the violation took place within the jurisdiction of another state.

A great number of accidents are caused by human error, collisions are attributable to poor seamanship and could be avoided with alertness and prudence. Error can never be ruled out as a factor, but if errors are caused by a lack of training or poor seamanship and such occurrences can be reduced by stringent regulations.

The ILO has recently adopted a convention on Minimum Standards in Merchant ships along with a number of recommendations to its already extensive international seafarer's Code.

Following a number of accidents which demonstrated the appalling lack of training and a number of uncertified people manning the bridges of flag of convenience vessels, IMO entered

13. Ibid, P. 121.

the picture with the adoption of the 1978 convention on standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping, which entered into force on April 28, 1984. Another important agreement on maritime safety promoted by IMO is the 1966 International convention on Load Lines, which provides for the painting of Plimsoll lines on ships. Moreover, the Convention requires contracting governments to prevent ships from putting to sea without the appropriate International Load Line Certificates, and this essentially to avoid overloading, which increases the stress on a vessel significantly.

Number of treaties deal with some of the jurisdictional problems that emerge with collisions and other incidents. The International Convention for the Unification of Certain rules relating to Penal jurisdiction in matters of collision or other incidents of Navigation provides that, in the even of a collision involving the responsibility of someone on the ship, only the flag state may initiate criminal proceedings or arrest the ship. The International convention relating to the arrest of sea-going ships, on the otherhand, established the principle that a ship from a contracting state may be arrested within the jurisdiction of another state in respect of any maritime claim. Finally, the International Convention on certain rules concerning jurisdiction in matters of collision seeks to unify the rules of private international law by giving plaintiffs the right to sue before a court in the country where the defendant lives, where the collision took place, or where the arrest was

made.

In spite of these agreements, all of which were concluded in the 1950s, it still could be very difficult to find someone responsible for a mishap. There come in sight a example of Torrey Canyon and its sister ships arrest and not release until the insurers paid a \$ 7,500,000 damage settlement.¹⁴ Fortunately, the situation has improved somewhat with the adoption of the various liability agreements enacted since the Torrey Canyon incident.

First stated in 1609 by the Dutch scholar Hugo Grotius that all states have equal rights to use the high seas, subject to regard for the rights of others and they can not become private property. The only restrictions placed on the freedom of the high seas were that such uses did not infringe on the rights of others, and that each coastal nation had jurisdiction three nautical miles seawards from its shores. But with the change of circumstances and demands of the people the above sea law was not fit for the maritime actions. The role of oceans as medium of communication has multiplied. Militarily ocean based strategy of global dimensions has become possible. Sea based weapon system has come with problems of deterrence, power balance and war and peace. And a host of oceanic issues

14. Ibid, P. 123.

have cropped up arousing divergences of national interests.

India claimed only limited rights in the sea because valuable minerals and other things underlying within territorial waters. Territorial waters meant only three miles of course. In the changed circumstances and economic interests the extension of national rights over larger and larger parts of the offshore waters have become more significant. Along with developing countries India made a Presidential Proclamation on August 30, 1955, declaring sovereign rights over the seabed and subsoil of the continental shelf adjoining its territory, without specifying any limit. It was affirmed that the limit of territorial sea and the contiguous zone would be 12 miles.¹⁵

The first united nations conference held at Geneva in 1958 relating to the laws of sea adopted four conventions about the territorial sea and the contiguous zone, the high seas, fisheries and conservation of the living resources of the high seas, and the continental shelf. This conference however failed to agree on the breadth of the territorial sea and the extent of the exclusive fisheries zone. A second united nations conference on the laws of the sea held in 1960 to resolve these two issues was remained unsuccessful. Because some newly emerged nations began to look upon international law as an alien

system imposed by the western countries for the protection of their interests. The conference failed also because of the political polarisation around the 3 and 12 mile limits of territorial waters. Then in 1970 the U.N. General assembly decided to convene the 3rd U.N. conference on the law of the sea to deal comprehensively with the entire range of issues involved. A 42 members sea bed committee was constituted for this purpose but it failed also to agree on drafting articles for a convention and on rules of procedure. The General Assembly adopted the Declaration of principles governing the sea bed, the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. It declared among other things that the area concerned and its resources are the common heritage of mankind and would be subject to an international regime established by an international treaty generally agreed upon.

The 3rd U.N. conference on law of the sea held in New York in Dec. 1973, would seem that the traditional division of the sea into territorial waters and the high seas is being replaced by functional divisions with distinct regimes. These relates to internal waters, territorial waters, the contiguous zone, the continental shelf, the Exclusive Economic Zone and the high seas.

Internal waters refer to those parts of the sea that are so closely linked with the land as to be considered an internal part thereof and subject to the sovereignty of the particular coastal state. They can freely exercised their authority over

these waters and foreign ships can use these waters with the mercy of that coastal state.

Territorial waters limit accepted by the international community is 12 miles. The coastal state exercised sovereignty over its territorial waters except for the right of innocent passage for vessels and warships of other nations.

The contiguous zone is an area where the coastal state may take steps necessary to prevent and punish infringement of its customs, fiscal, sanitary and immigration laws. Its limit recognised in 1958 in 12 miles.¹⁶

The continental shelf is defined in 1958 as the sea bed and subsoil of submarine areas adjacent to the coast but outside the area of territorial waters, to a depth of 200 metres or beyond that limit, where the exploitation of the natural resources of the areas must be possible. The exercise their sovereign rights therefor the purpose of exploring it and exploiting its natural resources. Its limit is 200 nautical miles.¹⁷

E.E.Z. includes an area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea, extending upto a distance of 200 nautical miles from

16. S.N. Kohli, Sea Power & The Indian Ocean, Tata McGRAW-HILL Publishing Company Ltd., New Delhi, P. 73.

17. Ibid, P. 74.

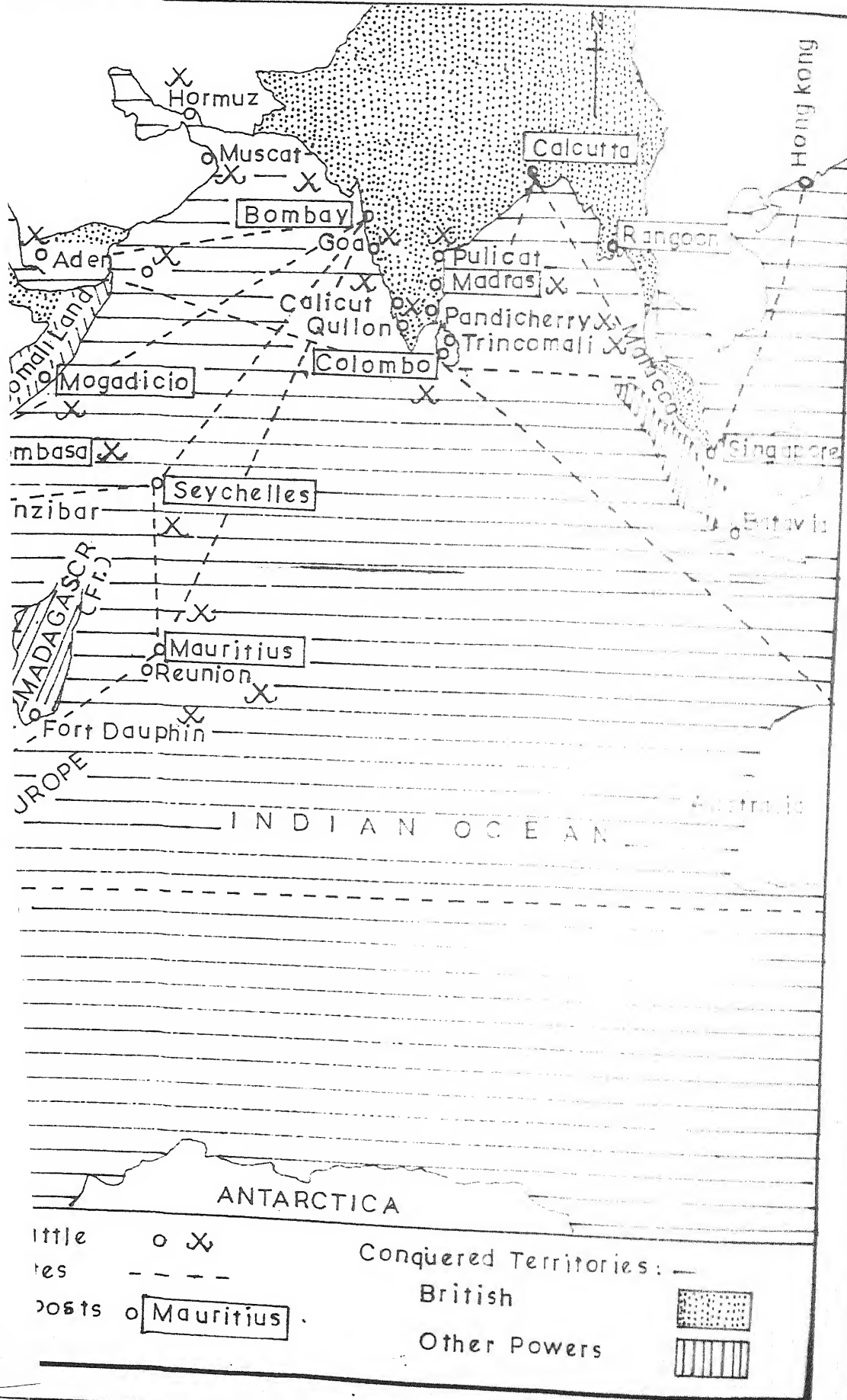
the baselines from which the breadth of territorial waters is measured. The coastal state has sovereign rights regarding exploration of natural resources, establishment of airfields, installations, economic exploration as production of energy from the water, current and winds and the preservation of marine environment, navigation, overflight and the freedom of movement.

To replace the old concept of sea laws, the Laws of the sea conferences in 1977 have been bogged down on the vital aspect of this issue, the exploitation of the precious resources of the high seas. With the help of developed technology and skilled mining processes. The discussion on some suggestions take place at the 1978 conference on the Laws of the sea and give some new laws on the agreed questions.

Although the conference has not so far succeeded in bringing about a convention on the laws of the sea, several points have been clarified. It is accepted that the old rules governing the use of the sea can no longer be relied upon to satisfy the international community as a whole. The sea law Treaty may be revised like any other document. This possibility might or might not be distant, but meanwhile ordinary laws governing security would come into play. A resourceful maritime state might now be expected to make up for what freedoms have been surrendered under the law of the sea. The sea law might open a hornet's nest of problems.

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Naval Activities in the Arabian Sea Area

Like other seas and oceans, the Arabian sea area also has a long maritime and Naval history going back to ancient times. The Indus valley, the Nile Valley and the Tigris-Euphrates Valley Civilizations had maintained maritime contacts. Recently the remnants of a large dockyard, about 710 feet by 210 feet, were excavated at Lothal in Gujarat. Another such site was found at Sutkagen, 300 miles west of Karachi. During the pre-Christian era the Nanda and the Maurya dynasties were in close contact with the Greco-Roman Empires. It has been recorded that Alexander the great built a harbour at Patala on the Indus and with the help of local pilots he sailed from there towards the Persian Gulf.¹⁸ Half of his army was transported by ships. The 1500 miles () long sea-voyage of Nearchus, Alexander's admiral, in 326 B.C., was probably the first case when such a huge army was transported by sea in the Arabian sea area.¹⁹

Maritime activities were well regulated at that time in India. Arthashastra mentions admiralty as one of the administrative divisions. Kautilya made a distinction between the inland water ways and the overseas maritime activities. Different sets of laws governed these maritime activities were con-

18. Rajendra Singh, Politics of the Indian Ocean, P. 2.

19. Ibid, P. 2.

fined to northern India. During that period the regularity of monsoon, astronomy and guidance by stars during the night became possible for navigation. The Matsya yantra. (magnetic compass) was invented by the Indians at that time.

Maritime contacts between the people of the Arabian sea area and of the Mediterranean region grew with improvements in the construction of bigger ships and in the ways of navigation. In the period of Chandragupta II (Vikramaditya) maritime activities on the Gujrat coast were boosted still further. Several and Ghogha were flourishing in this area. Socotra was a junction of the maritime trade of the Arabian Coast, the African coast and the Red Sea.

The Sassanids of Persia also were the maritime power in the Arabian sea at that time. They used the Arabian sea to reach the China via the straits of Malacca. The Arabs also gained their maritime power in the region after the advent of Islam. During all these years the Arabian sea area was, more the Arabian sea area was, more or less, a zone of peaceful maritime trade and no serious naval activities took place there, except for the minor abortive attempts of the Arabs to attack Sind from the west, during the 7th and 8th centuries. The eastern zone was also not dormant when the maritime activities were flourishing in the west.

Vijayanagar was the last of the local maritime empires

in the India. It flourished in the 14th century and maintained links both with the east and the west.²⁰ There was a great stress upon maritime trade and commerce though not upon naval activities. Some precautions were taken against local pirates but warships were not constructed. The Arab world was being occupied by the Turks. The Iranians were recovering from the Mongol on slaught and were busy containing the Turks. India was fragmented into several small states, which were fighting amongst themselves. Thus, when a new naval power, Portugal, entered the Arabian sea it did not have to face any strong local naval opposition.

The European x naval powers, once they come to the Arabian sea, did not have to make any special effort to acquire naval superiority in that area. Their naval superiority was, in fact, the result of their involvement in the European power politics. At that time, with the advent of gun-powder and larger ships, high seas had become a contested area. European ships merchant ships as well as fighting ships-regularly sailed into the Arabian sea and fought with their naval rivals. Gradually, the naval supremacy of some European powers enabled them to dominate the Arabian sea and deny opportunities to their European and local rivals in this area. There European Powers also began to dominate the littorals and thus heralded

20. Ibid, p. 3

the era of European imperialism in the region.

When the Portuguese entered in the Arabian sea, the littoral Powers had practically lost their naval traditions, though maritime trade was still being carried on by them. Their small naval vessels could not face the European ships mounted with heavier guns and were more sea-worthy. It would not be wrong to say that with their tradition of free maritime trade and commerce, these local states looked upon the European powers, when they reached the main trading outposts in the Arabian sea area, as trading nations and not as conquerors. The Arabian sea littoral where they reached first had never before been subjected to a determined naval attack and enjoyed an element of surprise.

Vasco da Gama reached Calicut on 11 May 1498 across the Arabian sea from Malindi, North of Mombasa within a short period of twenty-two days.²¹ He was welcomed by Zamorin, the local ruler, as a new trading partner. But very soon it became clear that the Portuguese had other ideas besides free trade and commerce. They have not only wanted a trade monopoly which would have harmed the established local traders, both Indian as well as Arab, but they also indulged in piracy and naval intimidation on the Arabian sea (high seas) and the blockade of the ports. Calicut was blockaded in 1503 and the first

21. Ibid, P. 4.

naval clash took place between the ships of the Zamorin and the Portuguese ships.²² Though the local fleet suffered great losses the Portuguese also had to withdraw and the first round ended in a draw. In the subsequent decades the Portuguese, led by Albuquerque, persisted in their attacks and succeeded in establishing their footholds.

The Conflict for supremacy over the trade routes, between the Portuguese and the local powers, in the Arabian sea, lasted for about eighty years. The Zamorin sought the help of the Sultan of Egypt who sent some ships to fight the Portuguese led by Mir Hussain. The Combined fleet did action against Portuguese during 1507-1509 without any decisive conclusion. The Turks also sent a large fleet under Sulaiman Pasha in 1538, but when a powerful Portuguese fleet appeared, the Turkish fleet, under the cover of darkness, conducted a strategic retreat and returned to its ports. It was left to the local powers to challenge the Portuguese and thwart their attempts to occupy the Indian coast in Arabian sea.²³

The Portuguese were able to occupy Coa in 1510. They already had control over some points on the East African Coast. They occupied and fortified Hormuz in 1508. The Portuguese were the first to have understood the concept of sea-power and to have evolved a naval strategy to suit their requirements in the context of the Arabian sea. Though their basic aim was to acquire trade monopoly, they occupied the strategic area which commanded the entrance to the Arabian sea : Socotra near the

Bab-al-Mandeb, Hormuz which commands the entrance to the Persian Gulf etc. It is interesting to note that the naval powers which appeared on the scene after them, including the super powers of today, have more or less followed the naval strategy as initiated by the Portuguese in the Arabian sea. After the Portuguese, the Dutch and the French adopted it, but Britain, which, by dominating the area during 19th century and the first half of the present century, perfected it.

Several European Powers followed in the footsteps of the Portuguese and reached the Arabian sea. Their presence in the area was influenced partly by trade considerations and partly by the religious and political controversy between the Catholics and the Protestants. This economic and religious rivalry was also influenced by the inter-state rivalry in Europe and very often the rise and fall of a European Power in Arabian sea was determined, not by its position here but by the fortunes of war in the European theatre.

The Dutch were the next European Power, who mostly were busy to get entry and establishment of outposts in the Arabian sea, till a longtime, but remained success to enter the Arabian sea with the fall of cochin in 1663 with a desperate struggle. After English and the French entry they had disappeared. The Portugues Power by 1660s in the Indian Ocean had been contained and they had practically been driven out of their strongholds in that area except for a few pockets like

Goa, Daman and Diu in Arabian sea in India. The Portuguese never decline can be explained as partly due to their involvement in had in the European Politics. Dutch did not survive the naval se. competition and were finally forced to relinquish their hold fish over most of their trading posts and to be content only with inent. Indonesia.

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The intense naval activity in the Arabian sea area during that period was largely confined to foreign powers. The littoral states were only like on lookers of the grim struggle, not even knowing its implication for them. Even the Mughal Empire in India, which was the strongest local power in the Arabian sea at that time, had hardly any navy. Some small naval craft were in use but naval activity was confined to the inland waterways and the coastal waters around Bengal. Though the Mughals had conquered Gujarat, which was the centre of maritime trade with West Asia and Europe, they did not develop a strong navy to protect their coast or their sea-borne trade because they believed in land-oriented strategy not in ocean strategy. As long as there was a strong central authority on the mainland, the land power could prevent foreign penetration but the moment it dis-integrated, sea power enabled the Europeans to conquer and subjugate it.

It can be said that Indians were not totally unaware of the threat from the sea. The Arabian sea littoral states had witnessed, over a number of decades, the gradual expansion of

foreign naval activities in the area, and had taken whatever action was possible under the circumstances. The zamorin had fought a protracted naval campaign against the portuguese. The rising Maratha Power fought against the growing British presence in the Arabian sea coast of the Indian subcontinent.

Shivaji the great Maratha leader, laid the foundation the Maratha Navy in 1659. Naval activities were initiated which led to the construction of a series of naval forts on the Konkan coast, as well as a modest ship building programme. In 1679, the Maratha fleet occupied the Island of Khanderi which even today commands the entrance to Bombay.^{2 4} British efforts to dislodge the Marathas from there failed even though they were assisted by the Sidis of Janjira, who were the local naval rivals of the Marathas. The Maratha naval power continued to expand even after the death of Shivaji. Several strategic naval bases, Swarnsburg and Vijaydurg, were constructed. The Maratha fleet, at its glory, was led by the renowned admiral, Kanhoji Angre, who took over its command in 1699.

The Marathas had to face a very adverse combination of forces. On the land they were opposed by the Mughal Empire and on the high seas they were challenged by the Europeans, who were often supported by the Sidis. The Mughals also supported the Sidis against the Marathas. Despite these handicaps, the

24. Ibid, P. 7.

Marathas challenged the foreign powers and made their naval presence felt in the Konkarn area. The foreign powers tried to destroy the Maratha naval base at Vijaydurg. Repeated attempts were made by England in 1717, 1718, 1720 and 1722, but it failed to dislodge the Marathas, despite the fact that in the 1722 attempt, the English were also helped by the Portuguese. In 1724, a large Dutch fleet also attacked Vijaydurg but had to retreat. The Marathas under the Angre were proving a hard nut to crack.²⁵

The Maratha ships were small, mostly shallow draft vessels, lightly armed, but fast. The Marathas used the element of surprise and their numerical superiority against the bigger ocean going and heavily armed European vessels. The heavily armed European vessels. The weapon system used by the Marathas influenced their naval strategy. The type of ships that were available to them forced them to adopt a shore-based naval strategy and the Europeans were left to command the sea. The result was that whereas the Marathas could deny the Konkarn coast to the foreigners, they could neither attack them on the high seas nor destroy their bases in other parts of the Arabian sea area. The death of Kanhoji Angre in 1728 was a big blow to the Maratha Navy. His successors continued the fight and did challenge the Europeans for some time in Arabian sea

25. Ibid, P. 7.

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25. Ibid, P. 7.

area. Vijaydurg was captured by the English Navy in 1755. That marked the end of the Maratha Navy and also the end of Indian Naval resistance to European penetration.²⁶

Besides the Marathas, the people of Muscat and Onan were also active in opposing the Portuguese and other foreign naval presence in the area. These people were the traditional seafarers, who for centuries had conducted maritime trade in the Arabian sea area. The Portuguese tried to break their monopoly. Socotra was occupied by the Portuguese in 1507. They also occupied Hormuz in 1508, and continued to occupy it, off and on, till the local people and the English Navy combined to drive them away, by the middle of the 17th century. The power of the rulers of Muscat increased gradually and they began to dislodge the Portuguese even from their other Indian Ocean outposts. But the local naval renaissance in the Persian Gulf area was short lived. The English who succeeded the Portuguese, maintained their naval predominance and reinforced their political position by signing protectorate agreements with the small Sheikhdoms in the Persian Gulf area.²⁷

The French India company was formed in 1664 and the French ships began to operate in this area by 1667. The riva-

26. Ibid, P. 8.

27. Ibid, P. 8.

ries amongst the European Powers in this area were affecting the maritime trade and commerce in the Arabian sea also continuously till some decades. French naval activities had been proved inferior to English naval activities in this crucial area of Indian Ocean.²⁸

The emergence of British naval power in the Indian Ocean as well as in the Arabian sea area went hand in hand with the acquisition of bases and the control of several strategic islands on the littoral. The British had already established their presence in the Persian Gulf, after they had defeated the Portuguese in 1622.. Gradually they began to expand their sphere of influence and by the end of the 19th century they were able to control the whole of that region. They occupied Aden in 1839 and thus neutralized-Socotra, which dominated the entrance to the Red sea. Maurities was acquired from the French in 1810.²⁹ The British position in the Arabian sea area was made secure by the establishment of bases at strategic points like the Suez, Aden and Bahrain etc. British control over the Indian sub-continent also made available to it sufficient economic resources as well as manpower, not only to defend but also to expand its rule in the area.

The British dominance over the area was also facilitated

28. Ibid, P. 8.

29. Ibid, P. 9.

on account of the Industrial Revolution, as Britain could make rapid improvements in its weapon system and the means of communication. These advances made it possible for its military planners to evolve naval strategies suitable for their national requirements. Thus Britain was able to dominate the Arabian sea, not only because it had made extra efforts to conquer the area, but also, because its efforts to contain the European rivals had led to the creation of a strong navy, which could be used either in the Arabian sea or in other theatres, in support of the British global policy. The Naval actions elsewhere decided the fate of the Arabian sea area. That lesson of history is valid even today.

Great Britain began losing its pre-eminent position after the II W.W. Its war losses crippled its economy and sapped its national strength, thus leading to a gradual withdrawal from the Indian sub-continent, west Asia, and other places. It will be difficult to halt this tide, and sooner or later Britain will have to relinquish its hold over the Arabian sea islands also. Following the decline of the British Power, the earlier British Position in the area is being contested by the local Afro-Asian states and by new superpowers. The old order has not been replaced by a new one as yet.

When India was partitioned in 1947, the ships of the Royal Indian Navy were shared between India and Pakistan in the ratio of 60:40. The force India inherited was by no means

commensurate with her new status and responsibilities. Therefore India decided to form a strong naval policy & made every possible development in her Navy to reach at the aim of safing her national interest.

In 1947 when Pakistani invated Kashmir, the Indian Navy was not involved. In 1962, when Chinese opened hostilities, the Indian Navy was not committed to action. In 1965, when Pakistan attacked India, the Navy was directed not to involve in offensive action, but to confine itself to safeguarding India's coastline and protecting the country's maritime trade.

In 1971, however, when hostilities once again broke out between India and Pakistan, the navy was permitted to adopt a strategy aimed at immediately wresting the initiative from the aggressor, and it lost no time in doing so. From the day Pakistani forces attacked Indian airfields, they navy swung into action with a large number of ageing ships and a small number of submarines, patrol vessels, and missile boats purchased from the Soviet Union. On the night of December 4, a composite force of missile boats and other surface ships struck Karanchi. Missile boats are designed for defence of harbours, but the Navy made ingenious use of them to attack Pakistani ships and shore installations at Karanchi and its heavy losses caused indespread demoralisation. In the confusion its own gunboats were attacked on a night when the Indians were no

where in the vicinity of Karanchi. Most of its large warships stayed in harbour. There were frequent rumours of Indian amphibious landings near Karanchi. A second attack on Karanchi was launched on Dec. 7. The harbour was hit again and the pall of smoke that hung over Karanchi days after the Navy's attacks on the oil tanks further demoralised the Pakistanis.

The blockade of the Pakistani ports in the Arabian sea was total. No ships can enter or leave them. On the western seaboard, resulted in the complete stoppage of supplies to Karanchi. The bombardment of almost all Pakistani reserves of oil fuel centres and the prevention of any replenishments adversely affected the fighting capacity of Pakistan's forces and led to an early termination of the War in the Arabian sea. A number of Pakistani merchant ships were captured by the Indian Navy, whereas neither a single Indian ship nor its Cargo fell into enemy hands. Neutral merchant ships in Karanchi port approached the Government of India for safe passage from Karanchi when the troubled waters become a threat to their security.

The course of the war at sea in 1971 underscored the lessons of history and military geography. India's need for sea power was reestablished in the eyes of the nation and the Navy's pride received a great fillip.

Thus the lessons of contemporary history, no lesson than

those of ancient history, point to the importance of the seas to India. Her maritime development during the colonial period was slow and constrained. Yet, even within this confined framework, Indians who were allowed the opportunity revealed a natural aptitude for sea faring and the intelligence to master its advancing technology. This maritime development can not be viewed in the context of the Navy's growth alone but it must take into its sweep the history of the merchant marine & the ship building Industry, also.

India's Maritime Security

India's growing maritime interests as well as the newly formulated law of the sea, has widened India's maritime horizon from the earlier 3 mile territorial sea to the present 12 mile territorial sea, 200 mile exclusive economic zone.³⁰ The continental shelf and the deep seabed beyond it right up to Antarctica, the farthest shores of the Arabian sea and the Indian Ocean. This vast horizon has also thrust upon India a new responsibility to formulate its long term maritime policy commensurable with its national ethos and its regional and international environment.

30. R.C. Sharma, The Ocean (Realities & Prospects, Rajesh Publications, New Delhi, P. 291.

Security of maritime interests has to be treated as an integral part of India's maritime policy. Hence, there is need to discuss and evolve a comprehensive national policy with a view to protecting and promoting India's interests and objectives, both in times of war and of peace, in what can be defined as its zones of maritime interests and activities. There zones are, broadly speaking, national and transnational. National maritime zone can be further divided into sub-zones like the coast line and islands, territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf. Despite the different legal status of these sub zones, they fall broadly within the framework of national maritime zone, and hence they will be governed by a broad framework of common maritime policy. The maritime policy in the transnational zone, i.e., the high seas, sea-bed and sub-soil thereof, will be governed not only by a different set of considerations of international law but also by political, economic and diplomatic norms different from those governing the national zone.

Maritime strategy in broad terms, mean safeguarding the freedom of passage of the high seas, especially keeping in view the sea lanes of strategic importance for the nations promoting and protecting national efforts aimed at the exploitation of maritime resources in national and transnational zones, preventing the exploitation of national resources by unauthorised persons and protecting the islands, the coasts, the immediate hinterland as well as the installations in the national zone

from threats directed via the maritime frontiers.

Maritime security, to be most effective, has to be maintained by a concerted efforts at legal and diplomatic levels as well as by appropriate use of military and para-military (Coastguard) forces and various organizations in the civilian sector. The civilian sector, in this case, will include the law enforcing organizations like the customs and the police, organization like the DOD and various ministries at the centre and the state level which are entrusted with the task of decision making and formulating legal and administrative framework in the context of maritime activities, as well as merchant shipping, fisheries, ONGC and such other public and private enterprises that are concerned with the exploitation of maritime resources.

The role of these diverse actors need to be integrated if a fruitful and Comprehensive maritime policy, suitable not only in times of peace but also capable of responding to threats to maritime security to various thresholds, has to be evolved. Such an integrated framework would dovetail, at national level, policies and functions of variables ranging from merchant shipping, fisheries and the ONGC to be customs, coastguard, the navy and even the airforce. This can be achieved by assigning to each of them a well-defined objectives, by ensuring a commonality of systems and equipment operated by them and through a network of information exchange mechanism & mutually supporting roles.

India's Maritime Interests

India's maritime policy should highlight three basic variables : interest identification, exploitation and protection. Thus, maritime security, as a concept, goes deeper than preparedness for naval operations in times of war, and should be seen within the above mentioned framework of identification, exploitation and protection of India's overall maritime interests. National maritime strategy, therefore, will have to be designed keeping in view the legal, economic, technological, diplomatic & military constraints. A clear line has to be drawn between India's maritime strategies vis-a-vis the national and the transnational zones despite the fact that the two in some sectors might overlap.

India's interests in transnational maritime zone are governed today primarily by three major considerations. They are the exploitation of seabed resources beyond the limits of state jurisdiction, exploitation of living resources in international waters and the freedom of navigation on the highseas and the international waterways.

India has recently ventured in the field of deep sea-bed mining, especially of the manganese nodules. The promotion of that interest would involve, besides inputs of international law and diplomacy, building an appropriate infrastructure both with domestic resources and with the transfer of technology as

well as local and foreign financial inputs. India has taken certain steps in that direction through the medium of international law and diplomacy (pioneer status) to advance its claims in that field. It has also initiated some moves with a view to developing appropriate technology by local R & D and by transfer of technology from abroad. More inputs will be needed for creating a technological infra-structure suitable for the task set ahead. Careful planning will be essential to define the long-term programme in that field.

Despite huge resources in fisheries in the Arabian sea, India has as yet developed neither adequate expertise for the necessary infrastructure for their optimum exploitation. It is true of most other littoral states of the Arabian sea also.

It is, however, encouraging that certain steps have been initiated in that direction. Protection of long-term fishery interest not only in the EEZ but also in the maritime zone beyond it should be a part of the maritime policy. However, the main thrust in that direction has to be largely civilian; both at the government and non-government levels. Scholars, legal experts, environmentalists as well as officials of various departments connected with the fisheries and diplomats will have to pool their resources to work out a long term policy. If the countries of Arabian sea region have to conserve their maritime living resources, they must mobilize adequate public opinion.

The Arabian sea has large maritime trade. Free access to the sea lanes both on the high seas as well as through the choke points, whether natural or manmade, like the Bab-al-Mandeb, straits of Hormuz, the Suez canal etc., thus become vital not only of the regional powers but also of other developed and developing countries.

International law is fairly clear on the question of freedom of navigation on the high seas and the right of innocent passage. But diplomacy is still needed to maintain an environment where these freedoms can be enjoyed. Freedom of navigation might be impaired due to several factors, especially due to escalation of conflictual situations. The blocking of the Suez canal following the wars of 1956 and 1967 and the present threat to the freedom of navigation in the Gulf and the strait of Hormuz are clear indicators where conflictual environment can and does deny freedom of navigation.³¹ These choke points and searoutes are threatened not only by regional rivalries but also by the direct and indirect impact of great power rivalry. Thus, not only international law but also diplomacy will have to be invoked to maintain peace and freedom of transit. In their context the concept of Arabian sea as, a part of Indian Ocean, a area of peace needs to be emphasized all the more.

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Unlike the transnational maritime area, a state has greater latitude to plan and execute maritime policy in its national maritime zone, whether it be the question of optimum exploitation of resources or their security. The new limits of state jurisdiction, now extending upto 200 mile EEZ and to the continental shelf, are the gifts of the agreement arising out of the view condification of the law of the sea. But the new limits of state jurisdiction in matters of national maritime zone have to be re-affirmed, for diplomatic reasons, through bilateral or multi-lateral agreements with neighbouring states.

India has negotiated successfully such agreements with many littoral states of Arabian sea, would not only help to define national maritime zone on a regional basis but also help to promote regional cooperation in maritime matters. A regional approach to maritime policy will, in turn, not only protect the interests of each state but also help to promote cooperation in practice. This especially true in the case of fisheries where mutually beneficial support like port facilities, food processing, marketing, exchange of meteorological data, technology and services and concerted efforts towards conservation of natural resources can serve as a useful means to bring about regional cooperation in a more meaningful way. Such efforts need to be encouraged.

Pending the creation of regional framework, India can,

on its own, take steps to exploit fishery resources. Despite the best of the will, India has not succeeded in the fruitful exploitation of living resources in national and transnational maritime zones. India will have to create an infrastructure that will include modern fishing harbours with cold storage and food processing industries, service and repair facilities, shipping industry geared to the manufacture of modern coastal fishing boats and big and small trawlers equipped with improved means of storage, radio communication, navigation, radar, sonar etc. Some steps are being taken in that direction but much remains to be done. These fishing harbours will also be useful not only for the coastal trade but also for the customs, police and coastguard in peace time and the navy in times of war. Thus, fishery will not only generate a momentum of its own but also help strengthen the larger framework of national economy as well as security both in times of peace and war.

Exploitation of resources on the continental-shelf is largely a matter of national policy and has little to do with regional cooperation. The main thrust today is directed towards the off-shore exploration and exploitation of oil and natural gas. India is forging ahead in that field under the overall operation of the ONGC too will have to coordinate its activities with other agencies like those responsible for the security of the platform, pipeline and on-shore installations (i.e. the Navy, the Coastguard, and the police), those responsible for environmental problems, fisheries etc.

Framework for Maritime Security

Maritime interests need to be protected at all levels and at all times. Since these interests are wide ranging, it is essential to evolve an integrated structure whose components while enjoying autonomy of operation at their individual level, can be fitted into an overall mutually supporting security structure. Some of these components are the police and the customs, ONGC, fisheries department etc. representing the civilian authority, the para-military force like the coast-guard, and the military forces like the navy and the airforce (and also the army whenever deemed necessary). All of them have to be integrated into a composite maritime security environment for optimum results.

To coordinate their activities during peace and war not only have their roles to be identified in the overall framework of maritime security but their equipment and training have also to be designed on the basis of this commonality of purpose. If such a framework can be designed, then the activities of these variables can be coordinated at zonal, regional and national level at each appropriate field of operation.

Maritime security policy will have to be evolved at the national level but it will have to be implemented at regional and more particularly at zonal levels. These such regions can be clearly identified; the Arabian sea (including the Lakshd-

weep islands), the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman-Nicobar group of islands. Each of these three regions will be further subdivided into two to four zones depending upon economic, administrative and tactical factors. These zones will coordinate the activities of the civilian sectors like that of the police and the customs in the territorial waters and of the coastguard in the areas and the continental-shelf. Personnel, equipment and facilities with those of the military forces, especially the Navy, even in times of peace, so that the infrastructure thus created can be fully utilized in times of war. Thus, a multitiered structure can be erected which will not only strengthen each other but also the overall maritime security of India.

It is not only possible to create such an infrastructure. First of all one will have to accept that concept and then evolve an appropriate policy at national level. Subsequently, the framework and the time-table for its implementation will have to be worked out in details at the operational level; especially at the levels of administration, equipment and support. One of the main thrusts of this policy will be to find out the commonalities in these fields at different levels so as to facilitate their interaction.

At the equipment and support level this common approach will influence the acquisition of appropriate types of surface vessels, aircrafts, radar, radio, communication facilities,

support facilities, like port and dockyard, bunkering, repair workshop and lines of communication with the hinterland. Stress will have to be put on the commonality of equipments that will be used by different organisations. A small but fast 30-50 ton coastal vessel equipped with radar and radio communication can be used by the police, the customs and the coastguard in the territorial waters or near the coast. A large 200-300 ton vessel can be useful for the ONGC, Coastguard and the Navy for operations further away from the coast and for a longer duration. Similarly, small radars, radio communication set and sonar equipment can be used by the fishing vessels. The data collected by the maritime reconnaissance aircraft of the coastguard will be useful to the Navy which will fill the gaps in its own maritime reconnaissance at no extra cost. Similarly, there can be commonality of helicopters used by the ONGC, the Coastguard and the Navy.

Such commonality of equipment and support at various levels will offer several advantages. It will be easier to train and integrate the personnel at all levels, in one composite framework, so that all organizations can work as parts of a bigger team. Also, production, use, training and repair to these equipment can be better streamlined. Moreover, by combining the civilian and para-military inputs to national security, defence burden will be distributed more equitably among all those sectors that stand to benefit from the maritime policy.

Military defence of India's Maritime Interests

Maritime defence against foreign threat is primarily the task of the Navy but because of peculiar geopolitical location of India, the Navy will have to integrate its strategy with that of the airforce and even the army whenever it is tactically essential. India's Naval defence has to be geared keeping in view three different environments the Arabian sea demands a different strategy.

India's Naval defence strategy will have to be based upon the concept of a force projection that is sufficient to deter trans-regional powers from imposing their will in the region to the determinant of India's national interests. However, this strategy can not be purely India-based, at least in the near future, for two main reasons.³² Firstly, despite the tall claims of having acquired a so-called bluewater navy, India will find it difficult to attain air-naval capability comparable to that of the super power in the Arabian sea area. Secondly, if India does attain that capability, it will scare at least some of the littoral powers into seeking extra-regional linkages that will, in turn, further entrench them in the area of Arabian sea. Hence the best strategy is to support

32. Ibid, P. 296.

the concept of Arabian sea as well as Indian Ocean as a zone of peace through littoral states and other neighbouring countries cooperation. Thus, at least for some years to come, India's Arabian sea strategy will have to have primarily a diplomatic rather than a military thrust.

The Arabian sea is of great strategic importance not only for India but also for others.³³ It is one of the high tension areas of the world. Moreover, Indo-Pakistani relations directly influence Indian strategy in the Arabian sea. It is an open sea and dominates India's Sea lanes to Europe, the Soviet Union, the Americas, Africa and west Asia. Through it passes bulk of India's trade including its oil supply. Arabian sea also includes strategic islands, especially the Lakshadweep group, and major off-shore oil installations. They are, however, sufficiently close to the coast and can be provided with air cover and naval protection, in times of emergency, from the bases on the mainland itself. While not ignoring the need to provide basic point defence against air launched or submarine launched threat to Indian strategic largest in the Arabian sea, it can be well argued that because of the limited range of operations (800-400 miles) in the Arabian sea, it is possible to project land based air power, over that area. That, however,

33. Ibid, P. 296.

points to the need for a greater interaction between the navy and the airforce in the defence of the national interests in the Arabian sea.³⁴

Despite above factor, the long term Indian Naval strategy in the Arabian sea will be determined in phases, among other things, by the need to protect the chain of islands that are within the reach of the shore-based combat aircrafts must be strengthened. Also the majority of these islands are very sparsely populated and the Chain of islands is so extended from north to south that they can not provide protection for themselves. Hence, their main defence against determined adversary will have to be based on the mainland. That is one lesson that India will have to learn from the Falk land conflict.

If the Indian defence is to be geared for the protection of these islands, India will not only have to upgrade its military presence there but also create an amphibious capability to project a force at least at the brigade level. Such a capability will have to be based at least around two medium aircraft carriers, each capable of operating at least one squadron of combat aircraft, two amphibious ships with medium helicopters for rapid tactical deployment of troops from ship to shore, at least one large tank landing ship, several landing craft, about

34. Ibid, P. 297.

four rolton roll-off supply vessels, oil and water tankers etc. besides an adequate member of fighting ships and submarines as escort.

In other words, India will need a medium taskforce equipped for amphibious operation upto a distance of about miles from the Indian coast because that is the distance of these islands in Arabian sea from the major naval bases in the western coast. At the moment India has limited long-range amphibious capability. That capability needs to be augmented over the years if India wishes to extend in future adequate military protection to its islands in the Arabian sea when the super power's presence is not ignorable and Pakistan also.

Thus India will need two different types of navies for these two different types of environments in the Arabian sea. Yet, the Indian naval power, even when fully developed, will be primarily defensive in nature. It might give India a presence of a blue water capability but in terms of real fire power and force projection for sea-control strategy it will still be far from adequate to project India as a naval power in the Arabian sea capable of launching sea-borne operations even against the medium powers in the region.

Maritime Security & National Development

Maritime interests are a part of larger national interests and have to be promoted and protected by the combined efforts of the Civilian as well as defence sectors. In a developing country, navy alone can not protect the maritime interests at all times, i.e. both in times of peace and war, without ere-ding its primary task of naval defence in time of war. Other agencies must, therefore, participate in the task of maritime security. The interaction of these agencies in that matters related to security of national interest, the country must seek to expand its base of national defence. If the base is surely military in nature then it fails to draw the maximum input from the available national resources. Hence, ways and means should be found to integrate national defence within the larger framework of national development.

In the case of maritime defence such a dovetailing is possible at different levels because of the possibility of common use of several item in the civilian and military sectors. Some of these common denominators can be based upon:

- (a) Softwars technology like navigational equipment, radar, radio communication, Sanar, and other electronic items.
- (b) Propulsion technology like different types of power plant, gear propeller etc.

- (c) Platforms like surface vessels, aircraft, hovercraft and their construction and repair facilities, and
- (d) Support facilities like food processing, port, dock-yard, workshop, overland communication (roads, railways & airports) etc.

Since public and private sectors can nationally benefit but also greatly contribute to the strengthening of several of these sectors, a coordinated policy of exploration as well as security of maritime interests can lead to fruitful interaction at public and private levels which, in turn, will strengthen the linkage of national defence and national development.

The spin off of such a strategy will be an accelerated growth of maritime consciousness at national level, a feeling that is largely dormant at the moment. India, which was a maritime nation once, became land-oriented. Maritime awareness has to be rekindled if India has not only to evolve a viable maritime policy but also to regain its rightful place among the family of nations.

The maritime strategy of a country is rooted in its national strategy which is decided to promoting and safeguarding its national interests. National strategy is total in concept and has political and diplomatic, economic and commercial, cultural, geophysical and military facets. Maritime strategy may appear to be a mere offshoot of military strategy; but scrutiny reveals that it has larger connotations because, politically and economically, the Arabian sea has the most eclipsing international character.

We have seen during the colonial era, sea power was projected as great distances from the shores of the ruling countries in order to conquer and defend colonies or to protect profitable trade. We have to say that even during the current period of political-de-colonisation, the seas are being used to exert politico-military pressure and for what has been described as a new form of colonisation the attempt by certain developed countries to secure the commanding heights in the regime of sea exploitation as Arabian sea in the Indian Ocean.

Certainly, non-alignment, involving the abstaining from the military pacts, has been strong, consistent characteristic of India's national strategy. It has suited her well. India, with an active & independent foreign policy, has sought to widen her areas of friendship and work confidently for peace and cooperation amongst nations of Arabian sea, politically & economically. She has strained every vein to build up her own economy and whenever possible, contributed to the political

liberation and economic development of her friends in the developing world. She has tried many times to defend herself against a series of aggressions.

It is pointed out that during the fifties and until the Chinese aggression. India's national strategy lacked adequate military content; that, after 1962, the Army's strength was doubled; the Airforce development speeded up, and the military aspect of national strategy acquired continental moorings; that for the seventies and beyond, a stronger emphasis must be placed a stronger emphasis must be placed on maritime strategy and a more balanced military development. In present time we can not ignore this ample need of maritime strategy in the strong.

The use of sea power in war time has been frequent in this century, including the post W.W. II Period. On Several times, naval task forces have been used to influence events by rapid movements in this area of actual tension. This deterrence is carefully graduated to achieve the aim of controlling or containing the situation without shooting as far as possible. Still today gunboat diplomacy is active. As far as India is concerned her peace strategy would be a continuation of her earlier policy with certain modifications to suit the changing times.

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CHAPTER VII

Conclusions & Suggestions
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Conclusions

In the preceding chapters, we have discussed and analysed at length the various aspects concerning the Arabian sea in India's security. There, we summarise the major findings of the study and answer, at least tentatively, the question with this study began. The Arabian sea region is in greater turmoil today than ever before.

It has been recorded Geopolitically during pre-Christian era when Nand and Mauryan dynasties established their contact with Greco-Roman Empire. In beginning Alexander the Great has built a harbour at Patala on the Indus river to go towards the Persian Gulf. In 323 B. C. first time Alexander's admiral 'Nearchus' transported his army through 1500 mile long sea voyage in Arabian sea area of Indian Ocean. During Chandragupta Vikramaditya some ports were developed on the Gujrat coast to establish contacts with the people of Arabian sea. Dwarka (The Gateway) one of the important port at that time. Besides Veraval and Chogha port were also flourished in that area. Socotra (Dwip of Shukhadhava) was a junction of maritime trade of Arabian coast, African coast and Red sea. During A.D. 3 Persia expanded their activities and travelled up to China via straits of Malacca. After the advent of Islam Arabs regained their maritime position in the Arabian sea area and since remained a zone of peace up to 7th & 8th century.

The constant maritime activities are found in Arabian Sea during Europeans. Vasco de Gama reached Calicut in 1498 after

crossing the Malindi north of Mombasa. On his arrival he was welcomed by the local ruler 'Zamorin'. The first Nand clash took place in 1503 between Portuguese and the local ruler 'Zamorin' which ended in draw after a great loss of both. Since continuously nearly 80 years, there was a conflict of supremacy over trade routes between the Portuguese and local powers. The local ruler of coastal India has sought the help of the others and a combined conflict was launched against Portuguese during 1507-09 but they could not succeed. Later on in 1537 Turkey also sent a fleet against Portuguese but they also had failed. But local rulers were engaged against Portuguese to occupy the Indian coast. They harassed them continuously but due to their small ships which were lightly armed were not capable of long distance operations on the sea and hence they were not able to contain the Portuguese naval power in the Arabian sea.

Portuguese occupied Socatra in 1507 Hormuz in 1508, Goa in 1510. They already had a control over some points on the western of Arabian sea and eastern coast of Africa. They were the first who had understood the concept of sea power and evolved a naval strategy to save their interests in the Arabian sea. Their basic interests were to occupy strategic points for monopoly of trade and they occupied Socatra near the Bal-al-Mandeb, Hormuz which commands the entrance to the Persian Gulf in the Arabian sea. Besides they also occupied Malacca which commands the outlet to China and Eastern Africa coast island Mogadishu, Mombasa and Zanzibar. After the Portuguese, the Dutch

and French also followed the same naval strategy as adopted by Portuguse but Britain has dominated this sea during nineteenth century and the half of this century.

Portuguse had contained and thrown away during 1660 except Goa, Daman and Diu. It was the period of Mughal Empire in India which was probably the strongest local power in Arabian sea at that time, had hardly any navy. Naval activities were confined to the inland waterways and Gujrat coastal area through small naval crafts. The Gujrat coast was the centre of maritime trade with west Asia and Europe in the Arabian sea. Mughal power was land oriented they had not given seriously thought regarding sea power to command this sea but they had taken whatever action was possible under the circumstances to protect themselves against foreign naval activities in Arabian sea.

Shivajee the great Maratha leader had laid the foundation of Maratha Navy in 1659. He has developed a Maratha fleet and established a shipbuilding programme. Maratha fleet has occupied the island of Khandari in Arabian sea which even today commands the entrance to Bombay. Besides they had also constructed several strategic naval bases like swarndurg and Vijai-durg in the Arabian sea. Maratha were challenged by the Europeans in 1717, 1718, 1720 and 1722 AD continuously but could not succeed.

After the death of Maratha admiral Kanhojee in 1728, they
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had lost their control over the sea belt near the Korkan and in 1755 Britishers captured Vijaidurg that Marked the end of Maratha's power in Arabian sea coast area.

Besides, Europeans were also apposed by the people of Muscat and Oman in this region. These people were the traditional fares, who, for a centuries had conducted maritime trade in the Arabian sea. Britishers, successur of Portuguse maintained their naval predominance and reinforced their political position by signing protectorate agreements with the small sheikhdoms in the Persian Gulf and Arabian sea littoral states. They occupied Aden in 1839 and thus neutralized Sacotra which dominated the entrance to the Red Sea. They had also neutralized the presence of France in their region during this period. After the complete withdrawl of Portuguse in 1622 Britishers established their presence in Persian Gulf area and at the end of 19th century A.D., They were able to control whole region of the Arabian sea. They developed their bases at strategic points like Suez, Aden, Bahrain in Arabian sea region. Later on Britain began losing its pre-eminent position after the second world war. After India's independence in 1947 Britishers have withdrawal themselves from India as well as from Indian Ocean region. Americans has taken the place of British influence strategically and politically. They established their Naval bases at Diego Garcia and formed a central α command in the Arabian sea.

India being a most popular state of the world as well as having a long coastline, has forced to play greater attention to the ocean resources. It has acquired economic sovereignty

over a vast stretch of sea-about two million Sq.Kms. The scale of scientific technological and industrial effort needed in India to exploit its large EEZ and the deep sea-bed would have to be massive. Unlike other coastal state of the third world, India has waken up to the great possibilities in the oceans. Its ocean's development activities have been stepped-up in the 1980s; the effort is ambitious in its scope and spectacular in the results already achieved. Indian major economic interest is offshore oil development. Though off-shore oil exploration commenced in 1962, it was only in the 1970s that it was taken up in earnest. With the discovery in 1974 of the Hydrocarbon bonanza at the Bombay High, a large area located 70 to 120 miles northwest of Bombay. India's off-shore oil production began to surge. From zero oil production 1975-76 it rose to 12.8 million Tons in 1982-83, providing almost two third of the total crude oil production in the country. It is expected to reach 17 million tons in 1983-84 and 22 million tons in 1985-86. Because of the accelerated production of oil from Bombay high, the off-shore crude production target for the sixth five year plan (1980-85) was enhanced from 51.3 million metric tons to 63.10 million metric tons.

India's oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) has been conducting extensive seismic surveys in the Indian continental shelf-an area of 380,000 sq.kms. and the continental slope 400 000 sq.kms. over the past decade. The success ratio of exploration drilling has been encouraging. Besides the Bombay off-shore region, where the majority off-shore reserves lie, ONGC

has discovered oil in Godavari, Krishna and Palk Bay basins and Gas in Andaman offshore. Indications of gas are also available in structures of Pondichery. The gas from Bombay High is helping to generate 240 MW of electricity for Maharashtra grid at Uran. It is also being fed to couple of chemical and fertiliser plants. The gas would also be used to run a large 500 mw power station in Bombay at the end of 1984. Apart from this the Geological Survey of India has undertaken extensive survey programme to explore mineral resources on the continental shelf and deep seabed. In addition the Antarctica expeditions are expected to give a boost to Indian research in oceanography, geology, meteorology and allied sciences. With India's entry into the selective Antarctic club in 1983, it is expected to maintain a stake in future mineral resource development of the Antarctic.

Harnessing of Alternative energy resources is also being studied as a part of ocean development. The engineering design of India's first plant to produce electricity from the ocean is ready. The ocean thermal energy conversion (OTEC) plant would produce electricity by utilising the temperature difference between surface and deeper layers of ocean waters. A plant of 1 to 1.6 mw capacity is to be built at Kavaratty in Lakshadweep Islands. The commission for alternative sources of energy (CASF) and other institutions are collaborating on the project. The studies are also being carried out on the proposal for tidal power stations in the Gulf of Kutch in collaboration with the French. The total tidal potential in Gulf is believed to be

around 1,2000 MW.

Besides the other economic interests of India in the Arabian sea area is its trade with the Gulf countries. Indian fresh fruits and vegetables are being flown regularly to the Gulf countries on commercial basis. Since 1975, there have risen fivefold by early 1979.

India's security is influenced by anticipated changes in several variables at global, regional and sub-regional levels. It is also influenced by events on its western flank in Andaman sea region. Three major factors will continue to dominate the scene; the Arab-Israeli question, Islamic reassertion, and future of oil. These three factors not only influence India's foreign policy but also domestic policy and hence need careful assessment.

India has been deeply involved, both politically and emotionally in the Arab-Israeli war since the last six decades if not more. Today that question has been reduced to two major issues; the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, including Golan heights, and restoring their legitimate rights to the Palestinian people. Unlike the past decades when Arabs had rejected the very concept of negotiated settlement with the Jews, today Arabs are on a diplomatic offensive and are almost challenging the ruling elite of Israel to come to a negotiated settlement. While the Arabs, including the PLO leaders have changed their interests. Indian policy still has to reflect

that changing mood vis-a-vis the basic Arab Israel question. An updated appreciation of Arab-Israel relations becomes essential if Indian has to frame its west Asia policy on a sound footing and not act as the last of the radical Arab states.

Such strategic importance of the Arabian Sea area is mainly due to geographical location, the important sea routes which traverse it, and the rich natural resources of the densely populated countries on its shores. The sea routes of the Arabian sea area connect by way of the Persian Gulf and the Red sea, the countries of the far east and Australia with Middle East and by of the Suez canal, the Far East and Australia with Europe. In this region, are located rich natural resources mainly wool, jute, tea, tin, rubber, gold, copper and magnesium in addition to its most important natural resource, namely oil in the western Arabian sea. In recent years, the USA, western Europe and Japan have become increasingly reliant on oil from the Persian Gulf and this dependence is likely to persist into the future. Most of these oil movements have to go through the Arabian sea. Another reason why this sea region has high strategic value, is the role it can play in the strategic nuclear rivalry between the regional & world powers.

The strategic importance of the Arabian sea area and the awareness among major maritime powers that naval power is a prime lever of influence, were among the major factors behind the rapid escalation of power rivalry in its waters. The concept of naval task force as an instrument of influence and a

means of applying pressure is not new. In the past, especially in the 19th century, the naval powers resorted to "gunboat diplomacy" and "showing the flag" whenever their status or claims were challenged in the area or country where they had direct interests.

The changing situation of the world has changed the strategic dimensions of this sea region. The retreat of USSR from the cold war has created more new problems to central & south Asia. In the post cold war period, the emergence of Gulf crises and mobilisation of US forces in the region has proved the period of one superpower and also confirm that America has their interests in Arabian sea in 1990^s. At present America is taking 700 million barrel oil per day from the Gulf and in coming years up to 1995 it is expected to reach up to 1400 million barrel per day. Besides, America's allies like Japan and all the entire European countries are primarily dependent on Gulf oil. Due to such dependency of oil, US always very much concern with Gulf on account of that US navy's central command H.Q. has been stationed in this region to control their oil interests.

In such circumstances of strategic world those are a lot of third world countries now also emerging as a regional super powers among them Iran, Iraq & India are much more suspected for becoming as a super power in Arabian sea region.

In the context of the current crisis in Gulf region, Pakistan will manipulate to enhance its geopolitical position.

If after the fall of shah of Iran and the saur revolution in Afghanistan, Pakistan become a key factor in geopolitical strategy of the U.S., the American interest in Pakistan now have assumed new dimension.

What is of for reaching significance to India's security environment is that Pakistan has already sent its commando forces to Saudi Arabia. That again need not lead to over-reaction because a large number of the Arab countries in the present Gulf crisis are backing Saudi Arabia. The crux of the matter is that Pakistan perhaps will emerge as a key link in the possible formulation of a long term plan for the security of Saudi Arabia and smaller Gulf countries. Pakistan Army is the only well trained Armed force East of the Gulf that the U.S. could rely.

Quite apart from this fact Pakistan's 800 kms. long coast line on the northern shores of the Gulf gives it a strategic leverage. That also partially explains why Mrs. Benazir Bhutto has to be demolished to make Sindh, safe for any strategic operation.

Looking back, soon after the Afghan revolution, American perception about Pakistan's role in this region changed, giving it a higher priority in the American geopolitical strategy than any other country. Not even Iran under the Shah recieved this importance. Against this background a report was prepared to the security of Pakistan by U.S. in 1980. Pakistan was assigned a vital role in the overall U.S. strategy for the Arabian sea

region and the Gulf. Advocating a close security relationship between the U.S. and Pakistan, report counted the advantages that such relationship would secure for the U.S. Besides averting the negative consequences of a Pakistan within the Soviet Orbit and reestablishing U.S. credibility and enhancing its prestige, the report discussed three more major advantages. The first was; 'The U.S. is currently building a Rapid Development Force (RDF) to protect Western Access to oil-Pakistan could serve as an extremely important entrepot for an RDF moving into the Persian Gulf from the East i.e. from Diego Garcia or the Philippines.'

In its quest for dominating the straits of Hormuz, the RDF lacked facilities in the northern flank of Arabian sea, even after it had acquired a chain of military bases in Egypt, Somalia, Kenya, Diego Garcia and Oman. The loss of access to Chah Bahar (Iran) naval port could be compensated by Karachi and Gwadar ports, in entire the Arabian sea. Such way Pakistan has taken place strategic key point for South Asia and West Asia. Along with Arabian sea area has converted into junction of all the strategic & military activities in this region which can play a discissive role for India's western flank security.

After the Analysis of Arabian sea in India's security, geopolitically, we have reached at the conclusion that the role of world power in the incidents of oil producing countries has been a very important factor. The increasing economic

potentialities of India like oil Gas, energy, fisheries, Trade with West Asian countries as well as employment of Indians in west Asia are basic factors. Thus this sea had been cultural bridge between Indian sub-continent and Arabian Peninsula. The Europeans had exploited this sea economically, politically and strategically nearly three centuries. Now Arabian sea area has taken place of international importance due to Persian Gulf countries massive oil reserves. Europe and Japan are fully dependent on this oil. In coming future America will also depend on this oil, on account of that America has made a very strong Naval blockade of these oil producing countries. In this Naval Blockade Arabian sea has converted in to a very sensitive area. At present the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq and its blockade by UN & US forces has converted an explosive situation in the Arabian sea region.

Along with this area being very important for India economically & strategically has forced India to evaluate and to strengthen its naval power. The following efforts are much more decisive and helpful to face naval security problems in 1990^s by the Indian Navy.

In fact, Since the Mid-1960^s both the Soviet Union and the United States had begun taking an interest in the region while the United States had a presence in the area before 1967, the Soviets took advantage of the British withdrawal and began to move into the region. Yet Britain, in several respects like to France, took adequate steps both to safeguard their allies

and see that a vacuum was not created. Both made interim arrangements anticipating their departure. Though historically no nation except Britain had held sway over the area, there was a quick mobilization of opinion soon after the formation of the base at Diego Garcia was announced.

The 36 countries of the region began lobbying and mobilization opinion in the United Nations as it was felt to be the appropriate forum in which to discuss the matter. The littoral and hinterland states were correct in this approach.

They demanded the implication of the declaration of the whole Indian Ocean as a zone of Peace, littoral and hinterland states security and consultations, and great powers and major maritime users of the Arabian sea and the ocean consultations. The United Nations on the Arabian sea and Ocean region question has made slow but consistent progress. The member States can not consider the question of the ocean in isolation and obviously questions of their own security arise. Most of the littoral states consequently have to fit in their own security and national needs to an overall framework which would isolate the region from the big powers. Several of the littoral and hinterland states have military treaties with one or another of the super powers and this adds to the complexity of the Problem. Littoral states wanted to halting further escalation and expansion of the military presence in the area. Littoral and hinterland states of the region do not want the Arabian sea to be a theatre of nuclear war. They also want limited Super Power

involvement in the region.

There is still ample scope for discussion to work out a common strategy in the Arabian sea among the littorals and the super powers.

Pollution of the sea is causing concern because the legendary immensity of the seas, which can with stand anything is dying. In fact, there is only one pollution i.e. of oil pollution in the sea because waste has been running into the sea since time immemorial. Now some very precise measurements have been made in several areas but they are not sufficient to control the pollution. Modernization and industrialization of the society and the nations are also its main factors.

The U.S. is determined to pursue its foreign policy objectives as a global power and the Diego Garcia base expansion must be seen in this context. The U.S. has acquired base facilities at Masirah (Oman), Gwader and Karachi (Pak.) & Hodeida (North Yemen) besides Diego Garcia which commands the North-western approach to the Indian Ocean. The U.S. has sent task forces in the sea off and on time to time. Pakistan is a key element in the U.S. military strategy. Indian public opinion always showed concern about the military build-up close to India's shores. As a shipping nation and a developing country with a vast coastline, India attaches a special importance to the sea and the off-shore Indian islands. India condemns the Anglo-American move comparing it with a dagger pointed at

India's threat. Iran has already denounced Super Powers efforts for forming naval task forces with its European allies for safeguarding the western interests in the Gulf and the sea.

The strategic importance of the Arabian sea in the present day world is indisputable. Its significance to the littoral states is much more today than what it was a few years back. A number of factors have contributed to bring about this change the erosion of the power of U.K., the rise of Japan and China, the frequent closure of the Suez and military tension in the region. Naval strategist A. Mahan said that in the 21st century the destiny of the world will be decided on its waters. Every big power now interested in expanding her sphere of influence in this region. Arabian sea is rapidly going way of the all continents.

The military and naval presence of the big powers in the Arabian sea region is a subject of wariness to the surrounding states. It was natural that the U.S. naval activities in this region should have dragged the Soviet Union also into this area. The geography of the Arabian sea is such that it can be used as an offensive deployment area for nuclear missile submarines by U.S. because U.S.S.R. is on its north, but the Soviet Union has important non-military maritime interests in the Arabian sea. Arabian sea is a particularly remote and vulnerable place for the Soviet Union naval ships. Moreover the western powers control most of the egress and ingress points

to the Arabian sea and therefore the possibility of wartime reinforcement for the Soviet ships in the Arabian sea is extremely slender. Simultaneously the Suez canal and Persian Gulf ways become highly vulnerable in times of conflict. There is no certainty of a friendly attitude of all the coastal countries of the Arabian sea in the event of an armed conflict. But the littoral and hinterland states believe that they have suffered for centuries under the yoke of colonialism and they are fully aware of the necessity to safeguard their hard-won independence. They wish to pursue the path of all round economic developments. It is imperative for them to live in conditions which do not in any way imperil their security and which can enable them to pursue their peaceful objectives. This was the rationale of their proposal to declare the whole ocean a zone of peace. The littoral states of the Arabian sea do not have navies of any consequence. The naval power struggle in the Arabian sea has already started and it is likely to gain momentum in the near future. Disputes between the regional countries which otherwise could be settled on the principle of bilateralism and mutual accommodation would be exploited by the external powers holding bases in the region for their own purposes. Littoral states are largely dependent for their naval development on the big powers. India's active role in the neighbourhood would certainly be resented by China and Pakistan but many other countries of the region would take kindly.

In order to maintain a strategic security balance in the Arabian sea region, the big powers are likely to strengthen their forces in the region. Because of the uncertainty of the situations in the area, the big powers intend to remain prepared to meet each other's challenge in Arabian sea region. The entry of France & Britain into the area and the complex interests of China, Japan and others would further complicate the situation in the region. Japan actually was able to achieve the status of an independent naval power designing and building her own ships. In Modern times no country can be a great naval power unless its science of nautical engineering is of the highest standards and industrial potential is not large enough. It is also necessary that the nation has to possess extensive skill in shipbuilding and must be a people devoted to overseas trade.

It is suggested that the future defence of Arabian sea will fall on India and the object of navy would be to secure and control of the sea lanes and prevention of the enemy in Arabian sea area. For this purpose the creation of a well-balanced task force is an objective.

A separate ministry of the navy can not long be postponed. The tradition of Delhi has so long been exclusively of land forces that to entrust the development of the navy to a defence minister is to ensure its subordination to army interests. A separate portfolio has to be created which alone would secure continuous attention to naval problems in all their

aspects and create in the minds of political leaders an adequate sense of the importance of naval development and also help to integrate all the factors necessary for the growth of a strong navy.

The creation of wide Public interest and pride in the navy is also essential. The teaching of naval history in schools, the creation of interest in overseas communities, the popularisation of the navy and its achievements and all methods of organisation and propaganda by which it can be brought home to the general public that the security of their freedom is bound up with the sea have to be consciously undertaken to restore the balance of our thinking. A navy league to keep the needs of the navy constantly before the public, the use of communication medias to popularise the naval activities in the past are important for the purpose of the creation of popular enthusiasm in maritime developments. Many countries of the region in different times have felt the need to develop a strong naval power. If they desire to be a strong naval power it is not sufficient to create a navy, however efficient and well manned. They must create a naval tradition and awakening about naval activities and also importance of the sea in the public, a sustained interest in sea problems and a conviction that regions future greatness lies on the sea.

Water ways are most important for national and international transportation and trade, because there are no need of road construction and ~~for~~ flexibility, minimum cost and heavy

load bearing capacity and less fuel consumption characteristics are to be presented there. In modern atomic warfare sea transportation being enough secure in comparison to land and Air has become more effective and important for sea trade.

In the surrounding of Arabian sea there are mostly developing countries and important water ways are passing through this region. Most of the trade of these littorals is depended on the sea routes. From very early period India's relation was with the many countries of Arabian sea region due to sea navigation and maritime activities through sea routes of this area. Indian civilisation had reached in extreme and become popular because of the Indian naval strength and affected the other civilisation of this area. These sea routes have become help ful time to time in establishing colonies of external powers in Arabian sea area. India has remained main sea power till 3000 years, but has lost this gradually and control of this area is today also in rival position.

There is, no doubt, that many nations, both from within and outside the Arabian sea region, have important interests in the sea as a high way of international trade resulting in the necessity of ensuring the security of the sea lanes; also the region has acquired great strategic importance. None of these nations is, however, more vitally interested than India is in this sea. 5 countries like Iran, Iraq, Yemen, India and Pakistan are exclusively dependent on the Arabian sea while some others (Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Saudi

Arabia, Qatar & Egypt etc.) have their shores on Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf is a naturally protected area and has near and easy access to the Mediterranean sea through the Red sea. Out of five countries, India has the longest shore being washed by the Arabian sea. More than half the population living in the shores of this sea. These countries interests are directly affected if any social or economic changes are forced on that population. Iran-Iraq war and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in the year of 1978-79 are a fresh example of these countries concern about the happenings in these Islamic countries. Almost all the littoral states have undergone the pangs of colonisation; India led them in the historic struggle for achieving independence and would not like the re-imposition of colonial rule over any of them. The influence of the Arabian sea is far greater for the security of the region than for any other littoral country in the region. Other littoral countries due to their own domestic problems and size, are not in a position to meet the challenges of the great powers in the sea. In view of its dominant position in the region, India is the only country which may be able to bring together other nations in an effort to counter the super powers. The danger to peace in its immediate neighbourhood and also to the world peace have been the cause of increasing concern to India. Arabian sea has therefore, assumed a vital importance for India.

In the past, the western powers, which established control over the Arabian sea, had dominated and colonised many littoral states of the sea and India was one of those victims.

India has every reason to be concerned about the intrusion by other powers navies into the sea. India categorically rejected the vacuum theory with others propagated by the British announcement of withdrawal from East of Suez, the theory under whose cover the US started establishing herself firmly in the Arabian sea and the Indian ocean with the help of her~~self~~ allies. India and the other littoral states like Iran have time and again reiterated that^{they} want the Arabian sea area with Indian ocean area to be free from conflict and more particularly from any nuclear.

They are opposed to the extension of the great powers naval competition in the Arabian sea and the establishment of foreign bases there. India with other littorals has voiced strong opposition to the establishment of US and Soviet naval bases in the Arabian sea region as US naval base establishment in the Diego Garcia. India has no desire whatsoever of dominating the Arabian sea as Iran or of converting it into an Indian Lake, but must take all necessary and suitable steps to safeguard its own security from any aggression from the sea it is surrounded by in the west. They must, therefore, reduce the tension if not possible to completely eliminate, by keeping the big powers off the Arabian sea and at the same time strengthening their naval forces. There is no doubt that they overlook the Arabian sea as a sentinel.

The formation of US strategic consensus from Egypt to Pakistan is resulting in pumping of arms into Gulf states and

percentage of budget being allocated for defence thus diminishing their's ability to concentration urgently needed developments. In this stage the use of nuclear weapons in the region can not be ruled out. The littoral states of this region mostly have not to be prepared to suffer the consequences of nuclear fall-out and any nuclear weapons short-falls while flying over region of Arabian sea. The destruction of the Gulf oil-fields will stop oil supply of Europe and also super powers.

India with her supporters, which was primarily responsible for bringing up the idea of peace zone area on the UN agenda, has consistently opposed big powers enormous military presence in the Arabian sea and Indian ocean as it introduced new tensions and conflicts and constituted a threat to peace and stability of not only India but whole of the region and the world. So many times it was said and persuaded also through non-aligned dias that the reduction of the big powers military presences in the region of Arabian sea as well as of Indian ocean, as the major tasks before the movement, is necessary for peace and stability and developments. In other wards, to curbing the cold war by demanding that the great powers should reduce their military presences in the Arabian sea and other parts. On 9 April 1981, Mrs. Indira Gandhi then P.M., told the Lok Sabha that the focus of cold war had shifted from Europe to the Arabian sea littoral pointing out that South-west Asia flank had become flash point for India and the region of

Arabian sea also. In her inaugural address of the 7th Non-aligned summit on 7 March, 1983, Mrs Gandhi spoke strongly against the intensive militarisation of the Indian ocean and the nuclearisation of the Diego Garcia base and some Arabian sea and Persian Gulf area bases and asked the non-aligned nations to redouble their efforts to ensure that the UN conference on the Indian Ocean and the sensitive region of Arabian sea specially was convened at the earliest.

The concept of peace zone in the Indian Ocean and peace area in the Arabian sea has a special significance. Rich in mineral resources, the most popular trade route of the world, the Arabian sea region is inhabited by a everage number of under-developed nations of the world. Arabian sea also provides ideal environment for the navigation. Its geo-political situation accords suitable basis for the external powers, specially the great powers, to control the land from sea. Moreover, the Socio-economic backwardness and the political instability, the scientific and technological lag, the defence weakness create an impression among the super powers about the power vacuum in the region. The recent manipulative activities of the super powers in the Arabian sea and the eruption of regional conflicts have created a hightened awareness for establishing permanent peace in the region. Weak, disunited and backward as they are, the regional states have evolved the concept of peace zone through a proposal to build up a collective opposition to the external military build-up in the

Arabian sea area. This proposal was accepted and adopted by the UN General Assembly on 16th Dec. 1971.

The success of the concept of free zone has been a controversial issue in the national and international forum of the world. In the present study, I have tried to ascertain the situations leading to the adoption of the concept its nature, viability and scope, short comings and limitations.

The freedom of the littoral states of Arabian sea depended upon the freedom of sea itself. The past and current development in the area establish that these countries, security, lies on the Arabian sea freedom at the mercy of any country capable of controlling the sea. Asian countries could continue to maintain the monopoly while the sea would remained free from the super powers interventions. Diversity in this national character and interests in the Arabian sea region, making political stability of the regional countries vulnerable, should be overthrown by the regional littoral states. The opposition of big powers in this area should be collective for the purpose of establishing it as a free area from the super powers intervention. The internal political unrest and poverty of the regional countries with lacking capability to face the external challenges also endeavour the external powers exercises in this area. The prosperous future of this region from many points of view attracted the eyes of big powers to establish their hegemony in the Arabian sea region with the aim of either increasing their respective areas of influence or improve

their maritime strength to achieve a balance of power. The military presence has been found as a major instrument for the realization of these aims as it offers strategically suitable places for the development of second strike capability to the big powers, especially the western powers. The multiple interests of the external powers and the divergence of regional political aspirations tend to convert the Arabian sea into an area of multiple rivalries. This is a x area of strategic importance possessing the potential to bring about major shifts in the global power structure, there fore it should be free from external power politics for regional countries developments or economic progress.

The military presence of big powers in the region causes considerable and continuous strain both economically and politically on the regional nations. It perpetuates arms race and encourages regional disputes amongst the nations. The regional countries can pressurise the outside powers to leave the region and can prohibit them to take advantage of minor local mutual disputes, in other words there should be performed regional unity to evacuate the sea ~~sea~~ from outside powers.

The Arabian sea should be free for protecting regional peace and safeguarding of their respective national interests in this area and the aim of demilitarization of the sea can be achieved. The free sea area can support the lessening of tensions, elimination of foreign military pressure and cooperation among the nations. The preservation of their independence,

sovereignty and territorial integrity and resolving of their political, economic and social problems depended upon the free Arabian sea from super powers rivalries.

The stability and security in the area is a necessary prerequisite for the effective development by the littoral states of their national resources towards the solution of urgent problems of development. There is an earnest wish of the Arabian sea countries for the establishment of free area. Thus the concept of free Arabian sea will provide to the littoral states of Arabian sea, preservation of Independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty, elimination of bases, relaxation of tension, reduction in threat, elimination of the big power confrontations, assurance of peaceful passage for all, a system of collective security, without military alliances, and peaceful development and progress.

It is of paramount importance to all the littorals of Arabian sea that the sea remains free from military contests. The interaction of the rivalries of the external powers or disputes among the littoral states has always resulted in the establishment of colonialism of the people of the region and therefore, no wonder that there is an extreme sensitivity among the littoral states regarding the great power rivalries and rival naval deployment. The arms race will adversely affect the sovereignty of whole of the region. Military bases of outside powers will create tension and great power rivalry.

The nations of the region are still struggling hard to consolidate their newly won freedom and a sense of insecurity and instability arising out of the military pressures of the western imperialist powers in the region was bound to affect the process of Socio-economic transformation. Peace zone concept aims at keeping the area free from great power rivalries and confrontations. The fear is that any large scale and loud presence of the navy of external powers is bound to create problems for littoral countries, the overwhelming majority of which are desirous of keeping the Arabian sea as a area of tranquillity. They also demanded this area should be nuclear free area. Arabian sea which is of potential tensions, is kept free of great powers. It is at the same necessary to back their efforts by strengthening their defence over their territories, maritime movements and other installations by making their navies adequately strong.

There is only one western fleet in the Indian Navy at western coastal territory based at Bombay. But this fleet is being developed into balanced entities with the necessary number of the various types of vessels. But current developments indicate the need for a third fleet, based at Cochin to reinforcement of one fleet by the other in short time at the long distant western sea front in viewpoint of increased naval activities in area of this tense Arabian sea of other powers of the world. Upto 1971, Indian maritime strategic thinking was largely focussed on the North Arabian sea. There is already considerable

foreign activity within this area. Foreign warships can be sighted, replenishing and patrolling and foreign aircrafts have been frequently spotted in the air. At present we have proper patrol of this area and foreign activity can be noticed timely. Outside powers who are largely interested in gaining superiority in this area are exhibiting it. Therefore, it is essential to know what is going on in waters under our jurisdiction or in areas significant to our maritime interests.

A study of our maritime history reveals that the peninsular character of our country gives the Arabian sea a preponderant influence on its destiny. The Economic life of India was and will always be dependent on the power that controls the Arabian sea. With an open coastline of over km, western coast of India can not be safe if the Arabian sea is unprotected.

The use of sea power in war time has been frequent in this century, including the post W.W. II Period. On several times, naval task forces have been used to influence events by rapid movements in this area of actual tension. This deterrence is carefully graduated to achieve the aim of controlling or containing the situation without shooting as far as possible. Still today gunboat diplomacy is active. As far as India is concerned, her peace strategy would be a continuation of her earlier policy with certain modifications to suit the changing times.

Naval cooperation with friendly Arabian Asian Countries in this area, a welcome feature in the last two decades, should be encouraged by mutual assistance training programmes, visits to each others ports and the many ways in which such contacts generate and keep alive lasting associations. The value of good will visits to other foreign countries should also be given due attention, with the stress of voice on the use of modern vessels for the purpose.

The Navy must be developed and trained in peace-time to present the necessary deterrence to any potential aggressor in the area. It may be used in support of coast-guard operations, when the occasion demands, and for situation where a naval presence is necessary to ensure that our sovereignty is respected and illegal exploitation of our sea resources do not take place.

On the political plane, remove every effort has to be made to erase the territorial and jurisdictional causes that lead to tension and confrontation at sea between neighbouring countries our maritime boundries should be demarcated by mutual agreement with our neighbours. It is necessary to support all attempts to secure international agreement on the laws of the sea. This is the only way to avoid maritime chaos, and to secure the freedom of navigation and a just distribution of the wealth of the seas. The strategy for our shipping development has already been outlined. It must pursue the twin goals of self-reliance and international equity.

Planning for naval development must take into account what is to be safeguarded and how best to defend our maritime interests. That we should build up a balanced naval force comprising the various elements of maritime defence is a foregone conclusion. The spectrum sea-going-forces, three dimensional in character, constituting the main strike forces with a provision for various escort commitments;

coastal defence forces, required to sanitise an area roughly extending to the limits of our exclusive economic zones;

harbour defence forces, to protect vital ports & harbours;

logistic support forces, to replenish the front line forces at sea;

amphibious forces, for the defence of our outlying territories and other amphibious tasks; and

The air elements that should be integrated with the above forces, as required.

Naval forces must include sea control vessels with the tactical air elements, command and control vessels and ships of frigate/destroyer type. Their grouping has to be flexible and tailored to suit each mission. They must work closely with shore-based reconnaissance and anti-submarine aircraft and be equipped with modern communications and weapons such as missiles of various types. Escort vessels are often necessary for the logistic support forces as well as for vital trade protection.

General purpose ships, such as frigates, lend themselves to this task as well. The endurance level of sea-going forces has to be high and this affects their size. Submarines are classified under sea-going-forces, but their missions are normally independent of strike and escort forces.

Coastal forces, required to protect our offshore installations and coastal trade as well as provide defence in depth to our coastline, consists of vessels smaller than frigates or destroyer, with less endurance power (since they operate relatively close to the shore) but with all-round fighting capability. Corvettes are normally used for this purpose and they work in close liaison with the shore-based air search and strike forces.

Harbour defence forces include minesweepers and minehunters to keep the approaches to the ports and harbours free of mines, seaward defence boats to counter infiltration and clandestine attacks by small boats and midget submarines, and missileboats for defence against surface attack. Air defence of the ports is separately catered the vessels used in harbour for, be would work in cooperation with aircraft dedicated to sea tasks, such as helicopters used for anti-submarine ventures or mine-sweeping. The missile boats may be vessels with conventional hulls or, in future development makes it possible, hydrofoil or hover craft.

To keep the fleets at sea and obviate their constant return to harbour to take on fresh supplies of fuel, ammunition,

stores and victuals, all modern navies have logistic support ships, such as tankers and shore ships, which use underway replenishment techniques. These vessels have considerable endurance, but do not carry the sensors or weaponry for effective self-defence. They have therefore to be escorted.

Amphibious forces are required for the defence of our hundreds of outlying islands. Most of these islands do not have well-developed harbours with wharves and jetties; therefore, embarkation and disembarkation have to take place across the beaches. It is not possible to permanently garrison all these islands, mobile patrols and amphibious forces with beaching capacity are, therefore, necessary to ensure their proper protection. There amphibious forces with the capacity to carry army tanks, vehicles, guns and personnel and other supporting forces, need to be based, as far as possible, in these islands territories because of their distance from the mainland. The use of hovercraft for amphibious landings has been mooted and may soon become an integral part of amphibious forces.

Today, amphibious operations include the use of troop-carrying helicopters for vertical envelopment. These helicopters are carried in ships of the amphibious force. This is a capacity needing development and which is well within our reach.

The air element in naval operations ranges from tactical air in vessels such as the carrier, through shore-based aircraft, both fixed and rotary wing, to shipborne helicopters for anti

submarine, communications, logistic, and hydrographic work. The aerial surveillance of the sea is a critical aspect of maritime strategy. Aircraft, suitably equipped and in adequate numbers, have to be provided on our coasts and, where possible, in our outlying territories. We already have anti-submarine helicopters which can be used, not only aboard ships but from the shore as well, in the defence of harbours. Minesweeping helicopters may also operate from shorebases. The need to use aircraft for electronic warfare tasks should also be taken into account.

The determination of the right proportions of all the various forces is a matter of careful analysis and military management. Obviously, there will be many constraints, not the least being the availability of resources, which will inhibit and severely discipline any effort to provide the navy with its basic needs. But the acceptance of the principle of balanced forces is the cardinal issue.

During war, effective sea control is of paramount importance. We must command those areas of the sea that are vital to us and deny to the enemy those areas vital to him. This implies a bold strategy of wresting any initiative the aggressor may have gained and turning the tables on him. One type of firm retaliation is carrying the war into enemy territory by "attack at source". This, was achieved, for example, in 1971 when India attacked Pakistan's major naval base and port, Karachi, from the sea and the air. This put the adversary on the defensive and

secured the initiative for our side. But 'attack at source', though effective, can be fraught with much hazard, and the risks, and gains have to be carefully calculated. One of its attractive possibilities is that it may catch enemy units before they can sally out and take protection in the Arabian sea area, where they become a problem to locate and a menace till they are found and neutralised. The mining of approaches to the enemy's harbours is one way of bottling up its naval units and strangling trade. Pakistan attempted this unsuccessfully in 1971, but it is a potent method of attack and we should not only be prepared against it but also be ready to adopt it ourselves.

But wars at sea are not won by attacks at source alone. The decisive battle is normally fought on the high seas where naval operations embody the search and attack on the opponents surface warships and submarines as well as the seizure of his merchant ships. With the application of blockade, merchant vessels of other countries, carrying cargoes which can assist the enemy in his war efforts, can also be prevented from doing so. Some nations, such as Germany in the two W. Wars, have prowled the sea, in lone warships, to raid cargo ships outside the areas of blockade. This is not a war-winning strategy but a facet of trade warfare. Whatever the choice of method, it is certain that victory will elude a purely defensive strategy.

Offensive action requires the use of firm and secure bases as spring-boards for action. Thus, our base facilities, and the

coastal and local defence forces protecting them, are in integral and valuable part of the maritime operations scenario.

We have one major base on the west coast. The nature of maritime development in the Arabian sea indicates the need for a naval base in the southern border of sea also. It may not have elaborate repair and logistic organisations, but berthing, fuelling and other operating facilities should be provided.

As regards to the actual waging war, there are well-established principles which are taught in all important military institutions and have stood the test of time. Whilst these are universally applicable to war on land, sea and in the air, some of them need special emphasis in the maritime setting, with its peculiar spatial characteristics and the mobility of the forces involved. One is the concentration of force at the right time and place. It involves the best use of mobility, fire power, endurance, and a sense of timing. It does not necessarily mean the gigantic massing of forces, but rather the judicious use of such strength as will, by the clever exploitation of various factors, to achieve success. It does entail the prompt seizure of opportunities or the creation of situations that bring about the desired results.

Surprise is another guiding principle of war. It catches the adversary offguard, often unnerving and demoralising him. It can be achieved by deception and diversion and several other

ways. In maritime warfare it is true that it is only politicians who imagine that ships are not earning their keep unless they are rushing madly about the sea. A decisive facet in maritime strategy is the amount of restriction placed on one's submarines. To prevent a submarine from attacking a vessel until it is definitely as hostile, is to place the submarine in a strait-jacket and increase her vulnerability, particularly in the modern environment. In undersea warfare, when submarine hunts submarine, this kind of restriction could be fatal. Modern development point at removing some of the traditional trammels & customs.

A important problem is that of the control of forces at sea, particularly in these days of efficient long-range communication facilities. How tight, how close should be the control of fleet movements at sea to the remote shore headquarters? It is generally preferable to indicate broad aims and intentions and provide all available intelligence to the commander at sea, leaving him to translate them into effective action.

Since we are in the nuclear age, we must deal with maritime strategy in this new setting. Today, there are tactical nuclear weapons and strategic nuclear weapons. The strategic nuclear weapons are designed primarily for attacks on the adversary's main centres of military force, industry and even population. In this type of warfare, sea-based nuclear missiles, particularly those in submarines, would play a vital role. But this

types of war would be short. The use of tactical nuclear weapons at sea is a distinct possibility. Such weapons as nuclear depth Bombs and Torpedoes are in service today. Their use does not destroy large populations, yet they could be effective at sea. The radius of destruction of a nuclear depth bomb used against a submarine is so wide that errors in precise location are not as with conventional weapons.

As regards defence against nuclear attack, warships, no more than any other targets, can not survive direct hits or near misses of nuclear ammunition. But the lethality of even nuclear weapons is finite, and dispersed formations of ships provide one simple method of reducing the impact of nuclear attack. Of course, dispersal reduces mutual support, and the most favourable plan is one that achieves a balance between conflicting options.

At present all modern warships are so built as to be able to steam through a nuclear-contaminated area, when the need arises. They have monitoring devices and methods of excluding contaminated air from being absorbed during the time spent in the fall-out area. Also, simple method of washing away the fall-out are available.

In general, maritime strategy has to be flexible in seeking to exploit an environment characterised by a fluidity of situations and the lack of frontiers and geographical impediments.

and affected by the possible involvement of neutrals in battle zones, and the fact that all participating units are mobile. Once a conflict is unavoidable, bold offensive strategy is the best form of defence.

A nations maritime strategy has to be translated into naval force levels, and the gravest error in this exercise is to base them on mere ship-for-ship comparisons with the navies of potential or likely aggressors. This is well expressed in, the military balance.¹

To compare the maritime strengths of both sides, particularly on a regional basis, offers difficulties. Naval power is highly flexible, ships move between fleets, fleets move over great distances, strategic and tactical functions are often speedily interchangeable. It is far from easy and often inappropriate to set ships off against each other numerically. The requirement for destroyers is not related to the number of enemy destroyers but to the need to maintain a presence and to escort surface vessels against submarine or air threat; in anti-submarines and maritime aircraft operate as combined teams.

In present time, with the introduction of underwater and air elements, the assessment of naval strengths differs from the yardsticks used earlier in this century. It would be of little

1. The Military Balance 1972-73, P. 91.

avail to compare the number of submarines we own with that of a potential aggressor. It is more relevant to see the threats his submarines pose to our maritime assets and what we need to counter them.

In 1971, we had to deploy a substantial part of our fleet in the west, even after Pakistan's submarine Ghazi was sunk, in order to exercise sea control, by cutting off the enemy's lines of sea communications and attacking his ports and airfields. Thus, the three dimensional nature of sea warfare must condition every move. Tasks and missions must be the key consideration.

Maritime assets and liabilities must be studied to determine force levels wisely. A large number of ports and harbours is an asset, since the closure of one or two still leaves the rest open for vital trade. But this same asset is a liability since it multiplies the number of ports to be defended. Our off-shore islands are of strategic value, providing us with defence in depth, but defending them imposes commitments on our part and necessitates appropriate force levels. Our large shipping fleet is a distinct advantage, though the increased numbers to be protected means heavier defence commitments. Even one submarine at large in the sea threatens a large number of vessels. Another important consideration is that, in confrontations at sea, the parties do not necessarily have to be neighbours with common land frontiers.

In the case of a stalemate in an overland battle, the initiatives may well be beyond the land frontiers and rest with the seas. Sea communications, particularly for countries that can not afford large stockpiles, would be vital in such circumstances. This is why it is ill-advised to dismiss the defence of trade as unnecessary in future wars. We can not protect it everywhere, but we must be able to ensure it flow in vital areas and at crucial times.

In assessing the needs served by our naval forces, a modicum of imagination is necessary and the tendency to wish away possible awkward situations must be eschewed. National strategy and maritime strategy are the concern of the highest powers in the country, but public discussion on them assists the planners and helps the man in the street to understand the country's problems & policies. Thus, well-informed discussions in the mass media, in centres of learning, and similar forums can contribute to national decision-making in this important sphere of national life and activity.

India must develop the maritime vision necessary to assert her position as an important maritime nation and seek ways to ensure the security of her maritime interests, which hold the key to her future prosperity. For this purpose she will have to develop sea power in the widest sense. In this context, the role and importance of Navy can not but be emphasised.

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